Annex A Guidelines for Applicants

DRG4Food – Open Call #2
[HORIZON-CL6-2022-GOVERNANCE-01-10] Project #: 101086523

Executive Summary

This document contains essential information for the second open call for proposals under the DRG4Food project, known as DRG4Food Open Call #2 - Call for Solutions. 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 (DRGs). Their commitment is instrumental in enriching the DRG4Food Toolbox, 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.
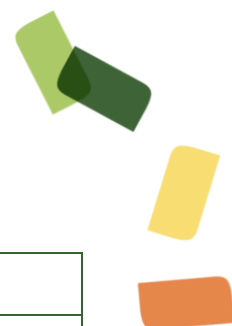
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Abbreviations

AI	Artificial Intelligence
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
ESR	Evaluation Summary Report
DRG	Digital Responsibility Goals
HE	Horizon Europe
IPR	Intellectual Property Rights
NDA	Non-Disclosure Agreement
OCT	Overseas Country and Territory
REA	European Research Executive Agency
RTO	Research and Training Organisation
SME	Small and medium-size enterprises
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
TRL	Technology Readiness Level
USPs	Unique Selling Points
VAT	Value Added Tax

1. Background: Introduction to DRG4Food

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

Food safety, 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 digital world of food system, the Horizon Europe funded DRG4Food project aims to develop and demonstrate a set of innovative solutions.

This set of innovative solutions encompasses well-structured Open Calls along with a funding program, primarily concentrating on piloting scientifically and technologically advanced solutions in the domains of **food tracking**, **targeted 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 that can create a more positive and sustainable impact. Currently, software developments, and in particular data, tracking, intelligence, and insights, primarily cater to the needs of corporations and authorities and less on fairness, trust, and user rights. This imbalance and limitation risks perpetuating or further exacerbating an increasing 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 solutions and technology developments that can contribute to a more sustainable food ecosystem that is 'trustworthy by default'.

The Digital Responsibility Goals (DRGs) are designed for trust, responsibility, privacy, and user sovereignty by defining goal for a data-driven food system that is aligned with the European Digital Rights and Principles. The DRG4Food project will create a 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 addresses two sets of challenges: those pertaining to the food system and those related to digital solutions. Trust is important in the food industry. "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)*. Therefore, to more fully and equitably harness the benefits that a digitally enabled food system can bring to the areas of food access, safety, and security—contributing to a more sustainable impact on health and wellbeing—(re)building consumer trust and engagement in a digital food system transformation is crucial.

Yet, an adjacent challenge is that of a rogue digital world in an increasingly complex technological, social, and economic landscape. To accept that the adoption of new technologies is intended to make our lives easier, less complex, and more sustainable currently requires an increasing leap of faith. With a legacy of widely publicised data breaches, data misuse and manipulation, identity theft and biased AI decisions, technology adoption today is viewed with growing scepticism and guarded behaviour. 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 therefore be more strongly grounded in fundamental values such as inclusiveness, responsibility, privacy, and user control—especially when dealing with
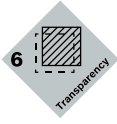
valuable and sensitive user data around food, health, and well-being. The starting point, thus, needs to be the user and how user can exercise their data rights.

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

	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.
	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.
	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.
	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.
	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.
	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.
	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-centred, inclusive, ethically sensitive, and sustainable, maintaining human agency at all times.

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 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 **Error! Reference source not found.**). 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.
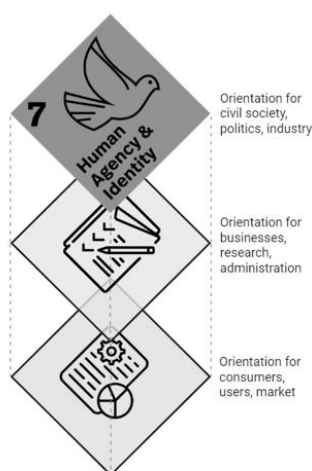
The middle layer 'contains' the guiding criteria, providing instructions for businesses and developers on how to act to build a more trustworthy digital ecosystem and conform to the respective goal.

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?

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The DRG4Food Project Consortium 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 projects to guide the ideation and development of their digital solutions,
- The DRG4Food Project Consortium to compile enablers for the 'Responsible Technology Toolbox.'

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 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 challenge areas, namely **Food Tracking, Targeted Nutrition, and Consumers' Food Choices**.

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

The budget set aside for Open Call #2 totals €973,134.50 and is planned to be launched on April 22, 2024. The minimum budget that applicants can request is €150,000, with a maximum limit of €300,000, at a financing rate of 100%.

Through a rigorous evaluation process, it is expected that a minimum of 3 and a maximum of 6 projects will be selected for support in Open Call #2.

DRG4Food invites small consortia (2-3 partners from a minimum of two different countries) to participate in its Open Call #2. Potential consortium partners could include:

- Innovative SMEs, startups, and other agrifood tech entities focused on R&D and piloting responsible, data-driven solutions in the areas of Food Tracking, Targeted Nutrition, and Influencing 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 such as NGOs and consumer associations, tasked with assessing and

validating innovative solutions that align with their requirements and digital responsibility objectives.

The evaluation and selection process for the Open Call #2 is closely guided by the goal of demonstrating the combined value of addressing both core challenges—the food system and digital solutions—as being fundamentally trustworthy and responsible; as well as bringing value. Specifically, the selection criteria assess how effectively a solution enables users to exercise their data rights and adheres to the DRGs.

From a technical perspective the deliverables from Open Call #2 will be digital solutions that both advance and demonstrate the successful integration and application of several (open source) ***Responsible Technology Enablers*** throughout 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 engagement of end users in designing and validating both the conceived value of the solution as well as the perceived (and experienced) level of trust gained–and how this intentionally impacts the overall user experience, value, and effectivity of the solution. Furthermore, the development, integration, testing and documentation of each enablers' role, both independently and collectively, in an open solution that is driving DRG4Food's focus towards structurally enabling the further development of *Responsible Data-driven Solutions* in the selected food domain use case areas of **Food Tracking, Targeted Nutrition, and Consumers' Food Choices**–by advancing technology readiness level, contributing knowledge, open-source software, building blocks and solutions to be made available in the DRG4Food Toolbox.

The Open Call #2 business and technical support programme spans 9 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 selected project. Each project 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 technologies, concepts, databases, apps, regulations that help software architects and developers to create a digital solution. These resources offer support, facilitating the expedited development of sustainable and impactful data-driven innovations in alignment with the DRGs.
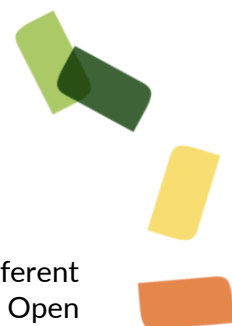
2. General Information

This document offers essential insights into DRG4Food Open Call #2.

DRG4Food welcomes small consortia (comprising 2-3 partners from at least two different countries, with at least one partner from an EU country) to submit project proposals for Open Call #2.

Potential consortium partners could include a diverse range of entities, 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 digital solutions that empower citizens to exercise their data rights, follow the DRGs, promote data rights, and contribute to the establishment of trustworthy and fair solutions for the food system.

Proposals need to be in line with one of the challenge areas: food tracking, targeted nutrition, or consumers' food choices (as outlined in chapter 2.2).

The focus is on fostering innovation in the food sector while adhering to DRGs and principles.

2.1.   Terms and Definitions

This section provides definitions for terms used in the Open Call #2 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 Open Call #2 in collaboration with at least one and no more than two other entities.
Beneficiary	A group of organizations that have submitted a proposal to the Open Call #2, 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 Business and Technical Support 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 program encompasses two main components: 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 and Submission Phase	Timeframe during which applicants can submit their proposals for the Open Call. Every Open Call has a set deadline that is strictly adhered to.
Evaluation Phase	Time span in which the DRG4Food Project Consortium, along with evaluators, reviews and ranks the submitted applications. Once this phase concludes, all applicants are informed about the results 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	The project is divided into distinct phases, each with its own defined duration. These phases are structured as follows: • 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. Upon the completion of each phase, the selected project undergoes a formal review conducted by an internal evaluation team. This review evaluates the project's progress and assesses its alignment with the predefined objectives.

2.2. DRG4Food Open Call #2 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 #2, 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 digital solutions related to food traceability, encompassing the entirety of the food system, from farm to fork. Technological proposals within this context should consider both environmental aspects such as CO_2 emissions, waste generation, and water and land use, as well as societal considerations, such as fair income for farmers. The proposed solutions should possess the capability to mitigate food fraud, validate adherence to geographical indications or botanical/zoological origins, guarantee the accuracy and verifiability of information presented on consumer labels, or something related to food tracking.

2.2.2. Targeted Nutrition

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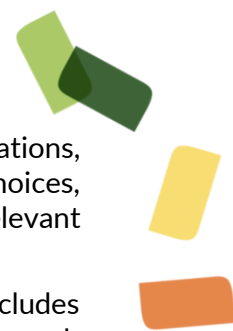
factors associated with food consumption, individual dietary preferences and limitations, lifestyle choices, and more. It also considers factors such as personal beliefs, religious choices, weight management goals, environmental sustainability considerations, and other relevant aspects.

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.

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.

2.3.   DRG4Food Toolbox and Enabling Technologies

A key reference for the DRG4Food - Open Call #2 is the Responsible Technology Toolbox being iteratively curated throughout the DRG4Food program to proactively guide the development and implementation of technology and solutions. The output of Call #1 will further complement the toolbox with base enablers (with goal to be implemented in a pilot solution) particularly developed with a view to innovating responsible solutions in the food system.

Open Call #2 is specifically aimed at enhancing the application and interoperability of modern technological building blocks in the food sector. Below is an illustrative, non-exhaustive list of digital technologies that are of interest, though inclusion in this list is not mandatory:

- **Privacy Enhancing Technologies** are a range of tools can help to maximise the use of data while reducing risks to individuals' privacy. PET's embody fundamental data protection principles by minimizing personal data use, maximising data security, and empowering individuals. They enable users to better protect their personal identifiable information (PII) when interacting with digital services or applications. They can also reduce the risk to companies in relation to privacy law requirements. Techniques focus on minimising information systems access, collection, or storage of personal data without losing functionality, and in particular, innovations and developments in:
  - o **Decentralized identities** are an emerging concept that gives back control of identity (and PIIs) to consumers using an identity wallet in which they collect verified information about themselves from certified issuers (such as the Government). By controlling what information is shared from the wallet to requesting 3rd parties (e.g., when registering for a new online service), the user can better manage their identity online.
  - o **Disposable identities**, The Disposable Identities enable developers of mobile or web applications to employ a novel self-sovereign identity and data privacy framework, aimed primarily at rebuilding trust in digital services by providing greater transparency, decentralized identity, and data control, with integrated General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) compliance mechanisms.

       Disposable Identities are designed for advanced decentralized privacy agreements, which can also be time, purpose and context bound through a secure digital contract; with verification functionalities based on tamper-proof technologies.

- o **Self-sovereign identities**, Self-sovereign identities (SSI) are digital identities that are managed in a decentralized manner. This technology allows users to self-manage their digital identities without depending on third-party providers to store and centrally manage the data.

- o Verifiable credentials, A verifiable credential can represent all the same information that a physical credential represents. The addition of technologies, such as digital signatures, makes verifiable credentials more tamper-evident and more trustworthy than their physical counterparts. Holders of verifiable credentials can generate verifiable presentations and then share these verifiable presentations with verifiers to prove they possess verifiable credentials with certain characteristics. Both verifiable credentials and verifiable presentations can be transmitted rapidly, making them more convenient than their physical counterparts when trying to establish trust at a distance.

- o Zero-knowledge proofs (estimated TRL 6-8), Zero Knowledge Protocol (or Zero Knowledge Password Proof, ZKP) is a way of doing authentication where no passwords are exchanged, which means they cannot be stolen. ZKP enables you to prove that you know some secret (or many secrets) to somebody at the other "end" of communication without revealing it. The very term "zero knowledge" originates from the fact that no ("zero") information about the secret is revealed, but the second party (called "Verifier") is (rightfully) convinced that the first party (called "Prover") knows the secret in question.

- o Multiparty Computation (MPC) also known as privacy-preserved computation is a cryptographic protocol enabling multiple parties to compute data jointly without revealing intermediate information during the computation, only revealing the results. While offering high levels of security MPC is more applicable to simple models and smaller numbers of participants (a logistical supply chain for example).

- o Federated Learning, or collaborative learning is a decentralised and privacy-friendly form of machine learning for data analysis. Instead of data being moved to a central location, the machine learning model is trained locally on each device, and only model updates are shared not the raw data. Federated Learning has the potential to solve two major problems of data analysis: improved qualitative analyses for society and safeguarding of citizens' rights in relation to privacy. Less secure than MPC care does need to be taken to ensure that information is not revealed via the model updates being shared.

- **Distributed ledger technology** (DLT) is a digital system for recording the transaction of assets in which the transactions and their details are recorded in multiple places at the same time. Unlike traditional databases, distributed ledgers have no central data store or administration functionality. In a distributed ledger, each node processes and verifies every item, thereby generating a record of each item and creating a consensus on its veracity. A distributed ledger can be used to record static data, such as a registry, and dynamic data, such as financial transactions. Blockchain is a well-known example of a distributed ledger technology.

- **Responsible AI** approaches to developing and deploying artificial intelligence (AI) in a safe, trustworthy, and ethical fashion. This includes being transparent, fair, inclusive, and accountable as well as ensuring it is consistent with human values which may expand beyond but should certainly include regulatory requirements.

Building User Trust and Engagement

Applicants are expected to actively involve citizens, making them both users and contributors to the project's development, as well as learners from its outcomes. This strategy aims to foster a culture centred around food quality, safety, transparency, and sustainability. By turning citizens into pivotal figures within the food production system, the initiative seeks to equip them with the necessary tools in terms of knowledge and technological solutions. This empowerment will enable them to make more informed and conscious decisions, advocating for a production system that prioritizes high-quality, safe, and sustainable products. Consequently, this approach is intended to lead to healthier, safer, and more sustainable diets, as well as more sustainable and transparent agrifood systems.

Throughout Phases 2 and 3, each demonstration will specifically aim to empower citizens in exercising their "data rights" or explore alternative approaches to food system data sharing that enhance privacy, transparency, and participation. These demonstrations will utilize digital tools such as webinars, videos, and source codes, alongside physical events like workshops and meetups, to effectively engage and educate the community.

2.4. DRG4Food Mandatory Requirements for Digital Responsibility

To ensure that proposals for DRG4Food - Open Call #2 contribute to a trustworthy digital ecosystem, mandatory requirements based on the DRG framework have been 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 and potential opportunities to develop digital technologies that foster trust in the realm of an evolving virtual food system.

Hence, call participants of Open Call #2 will be asked **I)** how their digital solution 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 digital solution, namely:

1. 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 #2 must be submitted through the dedicated DRG4Food page on the F6S platform. Access the page at: https://www.f6s.com/drg4food-open-call-2.

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 #2. 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:

1. Annex B: Technical Proposal (in PDF format, maximum of 12 pages)
2. Annex C: Applicant Declaration of Honour (signed by consortium coordinator
3. Annex D: Consortium Declaration of Honour (signed by all consortium partners, merged into single PDF)
4. Annex E: SME Declaration (signed by all SMEs within the consortium, merged into single PDF)

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 Funding Agreement' 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 project privacy notice.

2.9.   Origin of the Funds

Beneficiaries will enter into a specific Sub-grant funding agreement with the DRG4Food Project 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 Horizon Europe Grant agreement ID: 101086523.**

As outlined in **Annex E: Sub-grant Funding Agreement**, this connection between the Beneficiaries and the EC via the DRG4Food project imposes certain obligations on the sub-grantees in relation to the EC. The responsibility lies with the Beneficiaries to fulfil these

obligations, while the DRG4Food consortium partners ensure they are communicated and understood.

2.10.   Timeline

Submissions for the DRG4Food - Open Call #2 will be accepted from **April 22nd, 2024**, until **June 21st, 2024, at 5:00 PM CEST (Brussels time)**.

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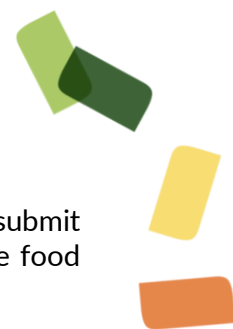
3. Eligibility Criteria

DRG4Food is calling for consortia comprised of 2-3 entities with diverse expertise to submit project 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 #2: https://www.f6s.com/drg4food-open-call-2.
2. Proposals must be submitted by small consortia of 2 to 3 partners as described in section 3.1.
3. It's required that consortium partners are legally established (incorporated) in at least 2 different countries. One of these countries can be any eligible country (see section 3.1.3), while the other must be from an EU country.
4. All applications and accompanying documents must be provided exclusively in English.
5. Proposals are expected to submit the DRG4Food Open Call #2 Technical Proposal Template (Annex B) and comply with its key guidelines.
6. The applicant must have a valid VAT number. However, in case having VAT number is not mandatory according to the national legislation of the applicant's country, a registration number from the respective national authority (National business registry, Commercial court or similar) must be provided.
7. Existing consortium members of DRG4Food Project Consortium and their affiliated entities are not eligible for the Open Calls of DRG4Food
8. Proposals shall only ask for funding for that part of the work that is not yet accomplished and will be carried out after having been selected for funding. Of course, this does not exclude the usage of e.g., results, IP, infrastructures or approaches already held by the applicants.
9. The proposal is delivered before the defined deadline, applying the requested submission procedure. The mandatory attachments include Annex B: Technical Proposal; Annex C: Declaration of Honor, Annex D: Consortium Declaration of Honor and Annex E: SME Declaration Form.
10. Only one proposal per applicant can be selected for funding. Applicants that received funding within Open Call #1 are not eligible to apply for additional funding in DRG4Food Open Call #2.

3.1. Applicants' and Consortium Eligibility

For eligibility in the DRG4Food - Open Call #2, all applicants and consortia must fulfil the criteria outlined in this section.

3.1.1. Types of Applicants

DRG4Food Open Call #2 invites submissions from consortia comprising 2 to 3 partners, each led by a designated Coordinator. The partners within the consortium must be legally established in at least two different countries, including at least one partner from an EU member state and others from any eligible countries.

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 2003/361[1], developing data-driven

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

solutions in the areas of Food Tracking, Personalised Nutrition, and Consumers' Food Choices. Unsure applicants can determine their SME status using the EC's online SME self-assessment questionnaire available here.

- **Research and technology organisations (RTOs) and universities, and other non-profit research organizations:** Open to both public and private entities focusing on conducting research and advancing technology, while addressing significant challenges related to openness, user-centricity, sovereignty, and trust. *These organizations should be non-profit and dedicated to research or technological development. Participation requires submitting proof of registration from a recognized business registry, such as the Commercial Court.*
- **Technology adopters/users in the food sector:** Includes civil society institutions such as NGOs and consumer associations interested in testing and validating innovative solutions that align with their needs and digital responsibility objectives.

3.1.2. Consortium Requirements

To be eligible, consortia must comprise 2 to 3 legally established entities.

The partners within the consortium must be legally established in at least two different countries, including at least one partner from an EU member state and others from any eligible countries.

Together, they must demonstrate their ability to engage users and contribute to the mission of advancing digital transformation and data-driven innovation, with a particular emphasis on **data rights** and **Digital Responsibility Goals**. 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).

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 States[2];**
- **Countries that were associated with Horizon Europe at the time DRG4Food signed the Grant Agreement with the European Research Executive Agency (REA) (December 2022):** Albania, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Faroe Islands, Georgia, Iceland, Israel, Kosovo[3], Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Norway, Serbia, Tunisia, Türkiye.

Participants (other third countries) from the following low- to middle-income countries are automatically eligible for funding[4], according to the List of Participating Countries in Horizon

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[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.

[3] This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

[4] Might be subject to the respect of EU restrictive measures

Europe[5], as of January 2023 (valid when DRG4Food signed the grant agreement with the Commission):

- Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Azerbaijan
- Bangladesh, Belarus, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi
- Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Colombia, Comoros, Congo (Democratic Republic), Congo (Republic), Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba
- Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic
- Ecuador, Egypt (Arab Republic), El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Eswatini, Ethiopia
- Fiji
- Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana
- Haiti, Honduras
- Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic), Iraq
- Jamaica, Jordan
- Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kiribati, Korea (Democratic People's Republic), Kyrgyz Republic
- Lao (People's Democratic Republic), Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya
- Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Micronesia (Federated States), Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar
- Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria
- Pakistan, Palestine[6], Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines
- Rwanda
- Samoa, São Tomé and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Sudan, Suriname, Syrian Arab Republic
- Tajikistan, Tanzania, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tonga, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu
- Uganda, Ukraine, Uzbekistan
- Vanuatu, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic), Vietnam
- Yemen Republic
- Zambia, Zimbabwe.

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.

UK participants are not eligible for Open Call #2, as the DRG4Food project is based on the guidelines and conditions set by the European Commission for Horizon Europe participation, which were established prior to the UK's association with Horizon.

Note: As per the European Commission's decision, 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 #2 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

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[5] https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/guidance/list-3rd-country-participation_horizon-euratom_v2.4_en.pdf

[6] This designation is not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual positions of the Member States on this issue
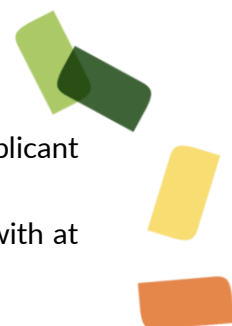
North/South America, Asia) during the contracting or implementation phases, the applicant may face disqualification or contract termination.

The consortium should include 2 to 3 partners from at least two different countries, with at least one partner being from an EU member state.

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 Project 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 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 #2 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').

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 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. Sharing personnel between different groups for multi-proposal submissions will not be allowed.
e) Organizations or individuals affiliated with organizations that received 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 #2 is €973,134.50.

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.

Upon project approval, lump-sum payments will be made after each of the three phrases, 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).

- **Personnel costs** – Costs of the personnel realizing the work and preparing the deliverables/reports after each of the 3 phases. Calculate personnel costs according to the rules and regulations of your country and real labour market data regarding the relevant positions. For the proposal template, only the final amount allocated to personnel costs is necessary. Personnel costs are considered direct costs and can't be managed as indirect cost.
- **Travel costs** – Travel costs necessary for the execution of the sub-project.
- **Equipment costs** – Borrowing or loaning of the necessary equipment is not eligible, only depreciation costs for purchased equipment are eligible.
- **Other goods & services** – Other goods and services include, for instance, consumables and supplies, dissemination (including open access), protection of results, certificates on the methodology, translations, and publications.
- **Subcontracting** - Subcontracting should be clearly justified. Costs must be reasonable and comply with the principle of sound financial management. Coordination tasks cannot be subcontracted. You should ensure that there are sufficient details for: the action tasks, the estimated budget, the procedure that will be followed to ensure best value-for-money. Any kind of organization could be subcontracted if they are not part of the DRG4Food Project Consortium. The evaluators will assess the scope and value-for-money aspects of subcontracting and their assessment will be reflected in the score of each proposal. Subcontracting is allowed for up to maximum of 25% of the proposed budget when properly justified. When submitting the proposal applicants should only write the total amount for subcontracting. Selected applicants should follow the standards for subcontracting set by the European Commission (EC), ensuring best value for money and absence of conflict of interest, during the project implementation. Procurement should be done according to the national and European regulation that is applied to your institution.
- **Indirect costs** - Indirect costs (overheads) could be up to 25% of the direct cost. Subcontracting is not included in indirect cost calculation.

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;
- The applicant 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 and 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 (Grant agreement ID: 101086523). There is no need to modify the DRG4Food Grant Agreement to include the selected beneficiaries.

4. Open Call Submission, Selection, Evaluation, and Contracting Process

Proposals submitted to the DRG4Food Open Call #2 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 #2 will follow the steps outlined in this section.

The **open call starts on April 22, 2024**. Proposals must be submitted by the deadline of June 21, 2024, at 5:00 PM CEST (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-2). The F6S platform will serve as the primary interface for proposal management throughout the Open Call #2. **Submissions made through any other channel will not be considered eligible.**

A detailed list of applicants, including important information for statistical analysis (such as countries, types of entities, and the selected challenge from Call #2), will be created. This list will also be shared with the REA to maintain transparency.

4.1.2. Preparation of Proposals and Mandatory Documentation
- When preparing your proposal, keep these points in mind:
  a. Register on the F6S platform and complete the online application at https://www.f6s.com/drg4food-open-call-2. Answer all questions and upload the required documents.
  b. The application form covers administrative details and includes general questions. Specify the main challenge your proposal addresses in both the application form and the technical proposal.
  c. Mandatory documents to submit with the application form include:
      i. Annex B: Technical Proposal (in PDF format, maximum of 12 pages)
      ii. Annex C: Applicant Declaration of Honour (signed by consortium coordinator)
      iii. Annex D: Consortium Declaration of Honour (signed by all consortium partners, merged into single PDF)
      iv. Annex E: SME Declaration (signed by all SMEs within the consortium, merged into single PDF)

Applicants must agree to the terms and conditions and provide the required documentation to meet the eligibility criteria. Failure to do so will result in ineligibility.

The following document templates are provided for reference purposes only and will be requested if the applicant is accepted into the DRG4Food Open Call #2 support program:

   v. Annex F: Sub-grant Funding Agreement Template
   vi. Annex G: Bank Account Information Form

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, the DRG4Food Project Consortium cannot guarantee that a resubmission will be possible if the request is**

received by the DRG4Food Project Consortium less than 72 hours before the open call deadline.

The Open Call #2 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.

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

Project proposals for Open Call #2 must meet specific Technology Readiness Level (TRL) criteria. The TRL level at the time of submission should be a minimum of 3 or 4, and the proposed solution 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 #2.

Applicants who submit project proposals to the Open Call #2 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 project proposals, it is essential to outline how they plan to handle and store personal data. Additionally, the proposal should address ethical and security considerations, as specified in Annex B: Technical Proposal. A data management plan will be required and will undergo revision during the initial stage of the selected project, with guidance and support provided by the DRG4Food Project Consortium as needed.

The selected projects will need to align the data they produce, as much as possible, with the FAIR data principles This means the data should aim to be Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, and Re-usable (FAIR). See https://open-research-europe.ec.europa.eu/for-authors/data-guidelines#fairdata for additional information.

4.2. Proposal Evaluation, Ranking 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 #2 ends on June 21st, 2024, 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 the last week of June 2024. The eligibility check will confirm if the proposal meets the following criteria:

a. Does the proposing consortium fulfil 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 DRG4Food - Open Call #2 Challenge Areas, 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 (21st June 2024, 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 form raises concerns. These concerns could include issues such as ambiguity in information, apparent inconsistencies in submitted annexes (C, D, E), 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 clarifications 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 Open Call #2 involves collaboration between the DRG4Food Project Consortium and independent experts.

Evaluators will be selected through a Call for Expressions of Interest, where experts with relevant expertise in the domains addressed by the Open Call #2 and experience in evaluations will be invited to participate. These experts will be evaluated based on their qualifications by the DRG4Food Review Committee, and a pool of evaluators will be established. The most highly qualified experts will be invited to evaluate the submitted proposals. The final number of experts will vary depending on the total number of proposals submitted to Open Call #2.

Evaluators will conduct their assessments independently, separate from their roles within their respective organizations, countries, or any other affiliations. These experts should not have any relation or conflict of interest with one of the consortium or proposed solution. They are committed to upholding principles of independence, impartiality, and objectivity throughout the evaluation process, always maintaining professional conduct.

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
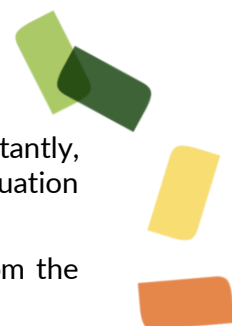
information to the DRG4Food   Review Committee via opencalls@DRG4Food.eu. Importantly, experts should not initiate contact with applicants independently during the evaluation process.

Each proposal submitted for evaluation will be assessed by a pair of experts, one from the DRG4Food Project Consortium and another external evaluator.

The assessment is conducted based on the following criteria:

Table 5 DRG4Food - Open Call #2 description of evaluation criteria

Evaluation criteria (EC)	Description
EC1. Excellence and Innovation	(a) Allow users to exercise their data rights, align with DRG4Food challenge areas as described in section 2.3, promoting trust, engage citizen participation, user sovereignty, and be in line with EU's FOOD 2030 policy.
	(b) Quality, relevance, and advancement and state of the art of the proposed applications based on decentralized architectures and
	(c) Clarity, robustness, excellence, innovation, and novelty of the project objectives and concept.
	(e) Feasibility and rationale for advancing the TRL within the proposed project timeframe for a successful market launch
	(f) Engagement of citizens/end users in co-designing features, solution development, and piloting/testing of the proposed data-driven solution.
	(g) Ethical and legal considerations associated with the proposed work and how they will be addressed.
	(h) Willingness to contribute to the DRG4Foodtoolbox with open-source solution(s) and / or planned use of enablers from the DRG4Food toolbox for proposed project
EC2. Data Responsibility, Transparency, and Alignment with DRGs	(a) Expertise in secure software design/cybersecurity;
	(b) Evaluation of cybersecurity threats, strategies for their mitigation;
	(c) Privacy by design and transparent, secure, and user-friendly handling of personal data;
	(d) Dataset integrity and potential dataset bias mitigation strategies,
	(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;
	(f) Clarity and explainability of algorithmic output, where relevant, and assessment and mitigation of algorithmic bias, where applicable.
EC3. Business Viability, Scalability, and Impact	(a) Identification and demonstration of Unique Selling Points (USPs) aligned with user needs, market research, and a clear value proposition for consumers, researchers, industry or policy makers
	(b) Comprehensive market fitness assessment, including competitor analysis.
	(c) Credibility of the (open source) business value model, financial projections, and a robust scaling strategy to European and international markets.
	(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 (including open-source licensing and distribution).
EC4. Consortium Capability, Team Qualifications, and Resource Allocation	(a) Clarity and feasibility of the work plan.
	(b) Clearly defined and monitorable milestones for progress measurement, as well as appropriateness and feasibility of deliverables.
	(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, security), collaborative strength, and synergies of consortium for development and commercialization.

The evaluation process will use a scoring scale ranging from 1 to 5 for each criterion, allowing for half-point scores. Each score will correspond to specific criteria and their associated rationale, as outlined in Table 4.

Table 6 DRG4Food Open Call #2 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 – Final Ranking and Selection Process

After the completion of the remote evaluation, all proposals will be organized into a ranked list based on their cumulative scores, which reflect the average assessments from evaluators.

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

To ensure fairness and as a quality assurance mechanism, the top 15 proposals will be reviewed by all Review Committee members in a calibration session to form the final list of ranked proposals. In the session, each of the top 15 proposals will be reviewed and if needed calibrated to ensure fair and accurate selection based on evaluation criteria EC1- EC4. This creates the final list.

Communications with applicants:

Each applicant will be notified via email and provided with:

- **Evaluation Summary Report (ESR)**: Contains detailed evaluation outcomes and feedback, sent after DRG4Food consortium and evaluators' approval.
- **Evaluation Decision Letter:** Indicates whether the proposal has been accepted, rejected, or placed on the reserve list, including further instructions for either negotiation or reserve list procedures.

The DRG4Food consortium, upon receiving approval from the REA, reserves the right to adjust the number of applications selected for funding, either increasing or decreasing from the initial projection. Such adjustments could influence the parameters and availability of funding for subsequent calls.

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 (HE) Rules for Participation[7], appropriate action such as disqualification of the application, termination of the Sub-Grant Funding Agreement Preparation phase or, if the Sub-Grant Agreement has been signed, the implementation of liquidated damages and financial penalties, suspension of payments, recoveries and termination of the Sub-Grant Agreement, will be taken against any applicants/beneficiaries found to have misrepresented, fabricated, copied, used without consent, or plagiarised any part of their proposal and implementation.

4.3. Redress Procedure

Within two (2) 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 the event of a redress request, review committee composed of TWINDS as the Project Coordinator, INOSENS serving as the Open Call Manager and Treasurer, Identity Valley with responsibility for Digital Responsibility Goals, Privanova in the capacity of Ethics and Legal Manager, PMT as the technical expert and ENEA as the food science expert, will undertake the review. This committee's mandate is to guarantee a uniform understanding of the issues raised and to ensure that all applicants are treated fairly and equitably. Redress requests are subject to the following conditions:

- Be related to the evaluation process or eligibility checks.
- Clearly describe and provide evidence of the procedural grounds for your complaint (in English).
- Received within the time limit (two working days) from the reception of a rejection letter considering the application as non-eligible or an Evaluation Summary Report that ranks the application below the selection borderline.
- Sent by the entity's legal representative that has also submitted the proposal.

This procedure is exclusively focused on addressing concerns related to the evaluation process and the verification of eligibility. The DRG4Food Review Committee adheres to the principle

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[7] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/EN/legal-content/summary/horizon-europe-the-framework-programme-for-research-and-innovation-laying-down-its-rules-for-participation-and-dissemination.html

of respecting the business and technical assessments made by duly qualified experts. Consequently:

- **Scope of Redress Requests:** Requests that challenge the technical or business judgement of the experts will not be considered and will be summarily dismissed.
- **Criteria for Re-evaluation:** A re-evaluation will be conducted only if substantial evidence is presented that indicates a procedural flaw significantly impacted the final selection decision. For instance, if the issue pertains to a single evaluation criterion but the application has not met the threshold in other criteria, re-evaluation will not be pursued.
- **Outcome of Re-evaluation:** The score assigned after any re-evaluation will be final and binding. Notably, this score may be lower than the initial score awarded.

This approach ensures that the integrity of the evaluation process is maintained, focusing on procedural accuracy while respecting the expertise of the evaluators. 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. Contracting

Subsequently, following the completion of the evaluation for Open Call #2 and the subsequent selection of projects, the DRG4Food Open Call Manager and Treasurer (INOSENS), in collaboration with the project Coordinator (TWINDS), will initiate the contract preparation phase. This collaboration will involve working closely with the designated representatives of the selected projects. The process will involve thorough administrative and financial checking (and may include technical or ethical/security negotiations) considering 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 Project Consortium and each beneficiary of Open Call #2. The items covered will be:

Inclusion of the comments in the Evaluation Summary Report of the proposals and mapping to the Sub-grant funding 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.
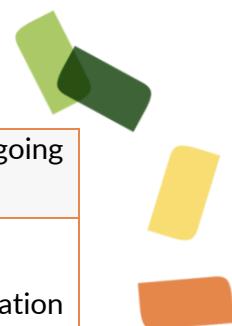
- Provide legal proof confirming that the applicant's organization is not undergoing liquidation or bankruptcy proceedings.

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 Beneficiary 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. 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   Business & Technical Support Program

5.1.   Mentors

Every selected sub-granted project will be paired with at least one mentor. This mentor will engage in monthly communications with the selected project to review progress and offer both technical and business guidance.

5.2.   Reviews

At each phase of the selected project's development, the DRG4Food   review committee will conduct detailed assessments. This committee is composed of key project partners, including TWINDS as the Project Coordinator, INOSENS in the roles of Open Call Manager and Treasurer, Identity Valley charged with Digital Responsibility Goals, and Privanova handling ethics and legal considerations, PMT covering technical aspects and ENEA for food science aspects.

Project coordinators of selected sub-granted projects are obligated to submit all necessary deliverables to the committee at least one week before the planned review date. This ensures the committee has sufficient time for a thorough evaluation.

Following the submission, the DRG4Food   review committee will assess the deliverables, a process that includes an online meeting. During this session, representatives from the selected sub-granted project teams will present their projects, respond to questions, and showcase their progress. Feedback from this review may include suggestions for modifications to the deliverables.

Once a deliverable is formally approved, the DRG4Food   Project Coordinator will inform the Treasurer, triggering the disbursement of funds as per the agreed terms in the sub-grant funding agreement.

5.3.   Payments

Funding for projects selected through Open Call #2 will be distributed via a lump sum, as detailed in the sub-grant funding agreement between the DRG4Food Project Coordinator (TWINDS), Treasurer, and Open Call #2 Manager (INOSENS), alongside the representative of the selected sub-granted project. Specifically, each deliverable of the selected sub-granted project is tied to a fixed cost, as stated in the sub-funding grant agreement. This fixed cost is the total sum allocated to each consortium member of the selected sub-granted project for their contributions. Upon the review of a deliverable and if it is positively evaluated, its related cost qualifies for payment. Should a deliverable be declined during its review, it will face re-evaluation in the next cycle. Failure to secure approval in the final review cycle will result in non-payment for those deliverables, with their costs being deducted from the sub-grant funding agreement automatically.

Payment for the accepted deliverables to the selected sub-granted project will proceed as follows:

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

- **Duration:** 1-month.
- **Activities:** Conduct comprehensive planning to outline the project's goals, milestones, Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), timelines, and the distribution of resources. This includes engaging in preparatory work to define the scope and approach for achieving a trustworthy data-driven food system.

- **Deliverable:** A **Pilot Specification and Design Document** that outlines the project's objectives, methodology, timelines, resource allocation, and the KPIs to be utilized for monitoring progress.
- **Support**: The DRG4Food project will review the proposed sub-project work plan to ensure it aligns with the broader objectives of the DRG4Food project and to facilitate integration with its technology enablers.
- **Funding released:** Up to 30% of the total project budget will be made available.

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

- **Duration:** 3-8 months.
- **Activities:** Execute the work plan outlined in Phase 1. This involves developing and piloting the proposed solution according to the defined objectives, milestones, and KPIs.
- **Deliverable: Pilot Execution and KPI Achievement Report** – This report should detail the technical execution and initial findings from the project implementation, including an evaluation against the predefined KPIs for a midterm review.
- **Support:** Provision of technical assistance for integrating DRG4Food technological tools and resolving any technical challenges encountered during the Phase 2.
- **Funding released:** An additional up to 50% of the project budget will be made available, based on progress and interim achievements.

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

- **Duration:** 1-3 months.
- **Activities:** Share the achieved results with external stakeholders and devise a strategy for commercialization and business sustainability.
- **Deliverables:** A fully functional software product meeting all requirements, accompanied by a **Business Strategy and Market Entry Report** that includes a detailed business plan with Business Value Model and Market Entry Strategy, and a report on the fulfilment of KPIs for the final review, assessing the project's overall success and impact.
- **Support:** Business guidance will be provided to help identify crucial activities (like business modelling) and key stakeholders (such as potential investors) to aid in the commercialization process and solidify the business strategy.

The DRG4Food project will transfer funds to selected sub-granted projects through their respective project coordinators. The responsibility for monitoring or verifying the distribution of these funds to individual members of the sub-granted projects does not lie with the DRG4Food project. It falls on the coordinators of the selected sub-granted projects to ensure that the funds are allocated to the consortium members in line with the conditions specified in the sub-grant agreement. Distribution should follow the predefined allocation for each deliverable and participant as detailed in the sub-grant.

5.4. Support Services Offered by DRG4Food Project to Selected Projects

The DRG4Food Project provides a comprehensive suite of support services to projects selected under its Open Call #2, designed to enhance their potential for success and impact. These services include:

5.4.1. DRG4FOOD Guidance, Materials and Tools for Digital Responsibility

This includes 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,
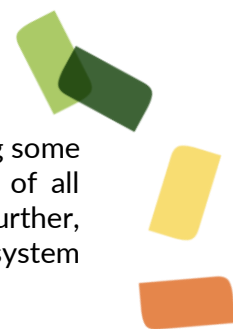
and tools for evaluation, providing a diverse and integrated view. A Playbook containing some of those resources can be found at drg4food.eu/playbook, a searchable repository of all resources related to each respective DRG will be available via the Toolbox (see 5.4.2.) Further, various webinars will be held to foster the understanding of the Responsible Tech ecosystem and the EU's regulatory landscape.

5.4.2. DRG4Food Toolbox

The DRG4FOOD toolbox is one of the main outcomes of the DRG4Food project, which lists available enablers and solutions that have been mapped to groups and use cases.

In line with building the responsible technology Toolbox, Open Call #1 of the Open calls was focused on building enablers to be made available as open-source technologies that provide building blocks to support the development of responsible solutions for the digital food chain.

Open Call #2 is focused on advancing the interoperability and feasibility of applicable DRG enablers through full integration in a responsible digital food system solution; demonstrating and testing them in a use case that will also be added to the toolbox as a 'Featured' solution. A 'Featured solution' will be expected to provide documented evidence of the multiple open-source enablers in use, with key learnings and insights on responsibility goals, usability and impact on citizen engagement and trust levels; technical (inter)operability and development iterations; (testing/audit) tools and documentation to the DRG4Food toolbox as open-source resources.

5.4.3. Business Guidance and Investor Readiness

Included are personalized coaching and mentoring services from seasoned teams during your project. Establishing significant contacts within the business sector, exchanging industry knowledge, creating important partnerships, and gaining crucial skills are fundamental components for achievement. Our program efficiently navigates the selected sub-granted projects towards investor readiness, providing support in business planning, investment strategies, sales, and team growth.

5.4.4. Communication Support

DRG4Food Project Consortium offers extensive visibility, promotional assistance, and networking prospects within the DRG4Food project ecosystem. Selected sub-granted project 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 relevant industry events, and join a vibrant network of innovators, investors, industry players, and government authorities.

6. Additional Considerations

The sub-granted projects selected for the Open Call #2 are recipients of indirect funding from the EC. They bear the responsibility to appropriately utilize the provided funding and ensure that all that all consortium members of the sub-granted projects 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.)

Detailed information and guidelines concerning the responsibilities of all consortium members involved in the sub-granted projects are provided in the sub-grant agreement (Annex F).

6.1. Responsibilities of Beneficiaries

6.1.1. Conflict of Interest

The sub-granted project representatives 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 for DRG4Food Open Call #2 cannot be affiliated with the DRG4Food   Project Consortium partners, nor can they be employees of the DRG4Food   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 Project Consortium. Immediate measures must be taken to rectify the situation. The DRG4Food Project Consortium retains the authority to assess the appropriateness of the measures taken and may require additional corrective actions within a specified timeframe.

If the selected sub-granted project 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 Beneficiary, the DRG4Food Project Consortium reserves the right to suspend further payments to the Beneficiary and claim the Beneficiary the full refund of all payments made to the Beneficiary up to date.

6.1.2. Financial Audit and Controls

At any point during the selected sub-granted project execution and up to five years post its conclusion, the 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 Beneficiaries are 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 Beneficiaries must maintain all 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 Beneficiaries 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 Beneficiaries. 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

Selected Beneficiaries must engage in active promotion of their own activities, the overarching DRG4Food project, and their results. This includes submitting selected sub-granted project descriptions when requested by the DRG4Food Project Consortium and emphasizing the financial backing received from the REA.

Unless otherwise specified by the REA or the DRG4Food project Coordinator, or if not feasible, any communication endeavour related to their the Beneficiaries (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 Project 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 selected sub-granted projects are 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[8].

Any publicity made by the selected sub-granted project with respect to their own project, in whatever form and on or by whatever medium, must specify that it reflects only the author's

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[8] https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/information-sources/logo-download-center_en

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 Project Consortium shall be authorised to publish, in whatever form and on or by whatever medium, the following information:

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

Beneficiaries are obligated to secure all required permissions for publication, ensuring that the dissemination of information by the REA and the DRG4Food Project Consortium does not violate any third-party rights.

If a sub-granted project representative makes a properly justified request and if the REA grants permission, the DRG4Food Project Consortium may decide to waive the aforementioned publicity requirements. This exception is considered if revealing the specified information could potentially jeopardize the security, academic, or commercial interests of the Beneficiaries.

Representatives of sub-granted projects are allowed to share confidential information with the DRG4Food Project Consortium and chosen evaluators, provided that these parties are committed to a specific Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA).

For Open Call #2, it is mandatory for all applicant consortia to confirm that their proposed services, along with the methods for their delivery and maintenance, have undergone thorough review to guarantee compliance to applicable laws concerning data protection, privacy, and fundamental rights.

6.2. Intellectual Property Rights (IPR)

6.2.1. DRG4Food Project Consortium

The DRG4Food Project Consortium itself will not retain an equity stake in any applicant's organisation, nor will it retain any Intellectual Property Rights (IPR).

6.2.2. Beneficiaries

The IPR and results generated throughout the implementation of the selected sub-granted projects will be solely owned by the respective partner or consortium of the sub-granted project. Applicants for Open Call #2 are advised include considerations regarding IPR, and the dissemination of results produced with DRG4Food funding within their internal Consortium Agreement.

As the DRG4Food Project Consortium assists the selected sub-granted projects in creating favourable conditions for their solutions to penetrate the market and achieve commercial viability, it's also anticipated that the selected sub-granted projects will contribute by sharing results openly (e.g., through Open-Source licensing and respective communities). While the results and IPR will remain with selected sub-granted projects, they are encouraged to share

parts or the entirety of the code/algorithms behind their solution in an open repository such as GitHub or Zenodo and becoming active in the attached community of practitioners and developers. Additionally, all the selected sub-granted projects must prioritize responsible development and operation of data-driven solutions by implementing DRGs into relevant project aspects.

1. **DRG4Food Enablers:** The results and IPR remain the property of the selected sub-granted projects. Beneficiaries are however committed to and responsible for Open-Source publishing of the developed DRG4Food enablers and/or solution to a publicly accessible repository (preferably GitHub) accompanied by appropriate and relevant documentation, and including additional assets that further support and promote the application or integration of the developed DRG4Food enablers into future projects and solutions - such as but not limited to;
   - Solution architecture
   - Developer documentation (API documentation, Release notes, README, System documentation)
   - Integration and Deployment documentation
   - Testing plan
   - Standalone (Automated) Testing Set-up and/or accompanying documentation (to support replication by future developers)
   - (DRG) Security Audit/s and actions to address any identified (DRG) security issues
   - Licensing
2. **DRG4Food Dataset Enablers:** Furthermore, for the selected sub-granted projects that are specifically enhancing existing or developing new Open-Source dataset enablers these need to be made fully accessible and open access, with appropriate documentation and information to support access, while also respecting FAIR principles.
3. **DRG4Food Toolbox:** All selected sub-granted projects are required to cooperate closely with the DRG4Food project to ensure that the output of the sub-granted project is further presented in the DRG4Food Toolbox. Requirements will be defined in the enabler template and include summary text, images, URLs, contact details and other supporting information that will be developed during the selected sub-granted project with a goal of adequately promotes the enabler/s further development and use.

Sub-granted projects must acknowledge that all technologies, infrastructure, and related assets involved are proprietary, owned by the respective partner or an applicable third party.

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, the DRG4Food Review Committee 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 reporting purposes. However, this list will not be made public.

The complete list of sub-granted projects, as well as information about the involved Beneficiaries, will be disclosed to the public once the sub-grant funding agreements are finalized. This disclosure will encompass the names of the projects, summaries, the names, and types of entities involved, their countries of origin, expected outcomes of the projects, timelines, and allocated budgets.

All Beneficiaries involved in the implementation of selected sub-granted projects, as well as for a period of five years after their conclusion, are required to maintain the confidentiality of any data, documents, or materials that are expressly designated as "confidential information" in accordance with the terms of the sub-grant funding agreement.

Upon the Beneficiaries request, the EC and the DRG4Food Project 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 Subgrant Funding 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 project Coordinator (TWINDS) 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 funding agreement implementation.

Authorized representatives of sub-granted projects are permitted to disclose confidential information to the DRG4Food Project Consortium and its appointed evaluators, provided that these parties have executed a specific Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA) to safeguard such information.

For Open Call #2, it is mandatory for all applicants to confirm that their proposed services, along with the methods for their delivery and maintenance, have undergone thorough review to guarantee compliance to applicable laws concerning data protection, privacy, and fundamental rights.

6.5.   Liability

The DRG4Food Project Consortium and the EC bear no liability for the actions or oversights of the applicant in relation to the 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 Beneficiaries cause harm to a third party, they are solely responsible for any resulting damage, and the DRG4Food Project Consortium bears no responsibility for such damage.

7. Contact Information

Applicants for DRG4Food Open Call #2 will exclusively receive updates and information through the DRG4Food website at https://DRG4Food.eu/open-calls/, ensuring transparency and equal access to all information. No official information will be communicated through other channels, such as telephone or email. Applicants are encouraged to frequently visit the website for any updates.

- To start the application process, please use the following link: https://www.f6s.com/drg4food-open-call-2.
- Have questions? Join our Guidelines Webinars to delve into the application process, requirements, eligibility criteria, and challenges.
  - Reserve your spot for **Webinar #1 on May 7th at 10:30 AM CET** via https://www.f6s.com/drg4food-oc2-guidelines-webinar-1/.
  - **Webinar #2 on June 6th at 3:00 PM CET** at https://www.f6s.com/drg4food-oc2-guidelines-webinar-2/.
- Join our Telegram group at t.me/DRG4Food to connect to connect with other developers and applicants, and to receive the latest updates.
- 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 will be ready to help up until June 18th at 5:00 PM CET, which is 72 hours before the deadline on June 21st at 5:00 PM CET. Any requests received after this time will not be considered or answered.**

Matchmaking Service for Open Call #2 Participants

If you need help finding partners and forming a consortium for Open Call #2, we're here to assist. To get support, fill out the **Meet Your Match** request form at https://www.f6s.com/drg4food-open-call-2-matchmaking/apply.

While our matchmaking service helps make introductions, it doesn't guarantee a favourable evaluation in Open Call #2. We advise participants in the matchmaking process to carefully assess potential collaborations for consortium formation.