



Food & Bio Global **SUMMIT'23** 26-27 September

The role of clusters in the transition of the agrifood ecosystem

Towards European Agri-food Sustainability Cluster Partnerships

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The Farm to Fork Strategy

**For a fair, healthy and
environmentally-friendly
food system**

European Green Deal - *von der Leyen Commission*

Establish a sustainable food system that:



- **has neutral or positive environmental impact** of food production:
 - preserving and restoring the land and sea-based resources;
 - mitigate climate change and adapt to its impact;
 - reversing the loss of biodiversity;



- **ensures food security and public health:**
 - Access for everyone to sufficient, nutritious, sustainable food;
 - high standards of safety and quality, plant health, animal health and welfare



- **preserves the affordability of food, while (a.o.):**
 - generating fairer economic returns & fostering the competitiveness sector
 - promoting fair trade
 - safeguarding occupational health and safety
 - ensuring integrity of the single market



Food security and food safety are cornerstones of our food system, and will never be compromised



The EU Code of Conduct on Responsible Food Business & Marketing Practices



#EUFarm2Fork #EUGreenDeal



European
Commission

Objectives of the Code

- The Code is an essential part of the **Farm to Fork strategy** and of the efforts to increase the **availability and affordability of healthy, sustainable food options** that help reduce our overall environmental footprint.
- It proposes a **collective path for all actors in the food chain** in Europe's transition towards a fair, healthy and environmentally friendly food system.
- It identifies the actions that the **actors 'between the farm and the fork'**, such as food processors, food service operators and retailers, can undertake to improve their sustainability performance.
- These actions can be directly implementable within their own operations or may encourage **collaboration with industry peers** and other food system stakeholders (such as farmers and consumers) to make similar changes.
- It was **co-created in 2021 by agri-food stakeholders**, in a Task Force chaired by FoodDrinkEurope with EU associations, companies, international organisations, NGOs, trade unions, and trade associations.

Aspirational Objectives

The Code includes a set of **seven aspirational objectives**, each with specific targets and a list of indicative tangible and measurable actions

1. Healthy, balanced and sustainable diets for all European consumers
2. Prevention and reduction of food loss and waste
3. A climate neutral food chain in Europe by 2050
4. An optimised circular and resource-efficient food chain in Europe
5. Sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all
6. Sustainable value creation in the European food supply chain through partnership
7. Sustainable sourcing in food supply chains

Aspirational objective 1:

Healthy, balanced and sustainable diets for all European consumers, thereby contributing to:

1. Reversing malnutrition and diet-related non communicable diseases (NCDs) in the EU
2. Reducing the environmental footprint of food consumption by 2030

The following **aspirational targets** have been set:

- a) Improved food consumption patterns in the EU
- b) A food environment that makes it easier to choose healthy and sustainable diets

Indicative actions

a) Improved food consumption patterns in the EU

- Encourage increased consumption of fruits and vegetables, wholegrain cereals, fibre, nuts and pulses, including locally-produced varieties (e.g. by increasing the availability thereof and/or access thereto)
- Provide/promote more sustainably-produced food products/meals (e.g. sustainably produced organic food; higher animal welfare standards; sustainable fisheries, aquaculture and algae products)
- Improve, where feasible, the nutritional composition and environmental footprint of food products/meals, e.g. through product reformulation and new product development/innovation
- Review and/or offer a range of appropriate portion and serving sizes aimed at sustainable food consumption
- Promote consumer awareness of healthy, balanced and sustainable diets, including sustainable food consumption, as part of healthy & sustainable lifestyles

Indicative actions

b) A food environment that makes it easier to choose healthy and sustainable diets

- Provide transparent, voluntary product information to consumers, e.g. through digital means
- Apply responsible food marketing and advertising practices, e.g. by adhering to self- and co-regulatory initiatives and standards
- Promote healthy and sustainable food service practices
- Integrate sustainable practices and health in the workplace
- Support local actions to enhance the availability of/access to healthy and sustainable diets for all

Aspirational objective 2:

**Prevention and reduction of food loss and waste
(at consumer level, within internal operations, and across value chains)**

The following **aspirational target** has been set :

A 50% reduction of per capita food waste at the retail and consumer level by 2030 and reduced food losses along the food production and supply chains in the EU

Indicative actions

a) Supporting improved food management at household level

- Take actions to empower consumers to reduce/prevent food waste, such as:
 - promoting more mindful buying
 - providing a range of portion, serving and packaging sizes to cater to different lifestyles and household needs
- Support, promote or undertake initiatives to inform or raise awareness of consumers in order to help them to prevent and reduce food waste (e.g. storage instructions, meal planning, date marking, recipes for leftovers)
- Optimise and develop innovative solutions (e.g. in relation to packaging, ingredients) to prevent food waste during transportation, distribution, home storage and use
- Develop and/or implement digital solutions and (other) innovative communication means to improve consumer information on food waste

Indicative actions

b) Minimising waste and reducing losses in operations and across value chains

- Identify and implement measures to improve the material efficiency of processes, e.g. explore the causes and potential for preventing and reducing (food) waste and losses
- Implement guidelines on food waste prevention and reduction (incl. measurement), e.g. recommendations of the EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste
- Prioritise redistribution of food surpluses to people in need, when relevant
- Optimise the use of raw materials through valorisation
- Avoid or reduce the generation of hazardous and non-hazardous waste, substituting or reducing use of toxic substances and ensure productive use and safe disposal of waste
- Raise awareness and mobilising resources, including on circular- and bio-economy, and investing in skills and staff training
- Improve collaboration along the food supply chain to minimise food losses and waste by strengthening capacity for innovation, e.g. new product development from co-products or discarded products

Aspirational objective 3:

A climate neutral food chain in Europe by 2050

The following **aspirational target** has been set:

Reducing net emissions from own operations, contributing to a 55% GHG emission reduction target in the EU food chain by 2030 (following a science-based approach)

Indicative actions

a) Reducing net emissions from own operations

Analyse current emissions, identify hotspots, and implement actions/pathways to reduce emissions in own operations, e.g.:

- Reduce energy use and improve energy efficiency for production through the use of less energy-intensive and low-carbon technologies (e.g. electrification, use of renewable energy, heating and cooling)
- Increase the use of renewable energy sources (e.g. solar, wind, sustainable biomass, co-products)
- Improve the efficiency of logistics (e.g. promoting smart logistics, local supply chains/sourcing)
- Apply sustainable bio(-economy)-based solutions while contributing to a circular economy

Aspirational objective 4:

An optimised circular and resource-efficient food chain in Europe

The following **aspirational targets** have been set:

- a) Improved resource-efficiency within own operations, contributing to sustainable, efficient use and management of energy and natural resources in operations by 2030
- b) Improved sustainability of food and drink packaging, striving for all packaging towards circularity by 2030

Indicative actions

a) Improving resource-efficiency within own operations

- Consider the use of environmental footprint or other Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) methodologies for products and/or companies to measure impacts
- Identify and implement measures to:
 - Improve energy performance SEE ASPIRATION 3
 - Improve water efficiency (e.g. water management practices, waste water quality, water recovery and re-use)
 - Reduce food losses and waste SEE ASPIRATION 2

Indicative actions

b) Improving the sustainability of food and drink packaging

- Identify, develop and/or foster the uptake of more sustainable packaging solutions, e.g. those aimed at:
 - increased efficiency of packaging/packaging materials use (e.g. through (the development of) re-use and re-fill solutions)
 - greater recyclability of food packaging
 - increased content of recycled and/or renewable materials in food packaging
 - increased collection of food packaging waste
- Support innovation in packaging systems that have a better overall environmental performance
- Support, promote or undertake initiatives to inform or raise awareness of consumers in order to help them to avoid littering and ensure that food packaging waste is properly disposed of

Aspirational objective 5:

Sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all

The following **aspirational targets** have been set:

- a) Improved resilience and competitiveness of companies operating at any point along the food value chain by 2030
- b) Quality jobs, skilled workforce and safe and inclusive workplaces for all

Indicative actions

a) Improving business resilience and competitiveness

- Gear new business development/models towards food sustainability
- Engage in research and innovation programmes on food sustainability
- Invest in long-term sustainable value creation

b) Supporting a skilled workforce and providing safe and inclusive workplaces for all

- Support training, upskilling and/or reskilling of workers
- Strengthen diversity, equity and inclusion in the workplace
- Strive to continuously improve working conditions, e.g. by investing in health and safety/ergonomics to make safer workplaces for all

Aspirational objective 6:

Sustainable value creation in the European food supply chain through partnership

The following **aspirational targets** have been set:

- a) Improved resilience and competitiveness of companies operating at any point along the food value chain by 2030
- b) Continued progress towards sustainable production, contributing to sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources by 2030 and improved animal welfare

Indicative actions

- a) Supporting improved resilience and competitiveness of the supply chain**
- Strengthen supply chain relations and create shared value with partners/suppliers across the chain by identifying synergies and opportunities for collaboration, e.g. in relation to:
 - Promoting technology and knowledge transfer (e.g. integrated farming techniques)
 - Engaging in joint pre-competitive research and innovation (e.g. co-innovation product/process/technology)
 - Engaging in capacity-building, training, advice and skills development
 - Boosting the uptake of digital solutions and modern technologies
 - Developing common methodologies and data sharing practices to measure supply chain impacts

Indicative actions

b) Stimulating sustainable production

- Promote and support innovation and/or increased use of sustainable agricultural, aquaculture and fisheries practices in partnership with farmers/fishers, in particular aimed at:
 - climate change mitigation (e.g. reducing emissions and nutrient losses)
 - improving biodiversity
 - enhancing circularity and resource-efficiency
 - climate adaptation while contributing to improvement of farmers' livelihoods (e.g. crop diversification)
 - improving animal welfare and human/animal health (e.g. promoting responsible use of medicines in animals; One Health)
 - sustainable management of natural resources (such as land, soils and fish stocks)
- Support sustainable use of pesticides and fertilizers whilst contributing to maintaining food security and resilience

Aspirational objective 7:

Sustainable sourcing in food supply chains

The following **aspirational targets** have been set:

- a) Transformed commodity supply chains which do not contribute to deforestation, forest degradation and destruction of natural habitat and which preserve and protect high value ecosystems and biodiversity
- b) Improved social performance in (global) food supply chains

Indicative actions

a) Transforming commodity supply chains

- Promote sustainable sourcing of materials in relation with (direct) suppliers, inside or outside of the EU
- Encourage the uptake of scientifically-robust sustainability certification schemes for food (incl. fish and fishery products)
- Identify and contribute to appropriate solutions and strategies towards:
 - supporting, conserving or protecting natural habitats and biodiversity
 - preventing, reducing or remedying negative impacts of operations on air, land, soil, water, forests
 - deforestation-/conversion-free food supply chains
 - afforestation
 - sustainable land use

Indicative actions

b) Improving social performance in (global) food supply chains

- Identify and address the most significant shortcomings in social sustainability across the food value chain affecting the most vulnerable groups
- Promote decent working conditions, occupational health and safety with suppliers
- Encourage the uptake of scientifically-robust sustainability certification/audit schemes for food (incl. fish and fishery products) in relation to social performance

Complementary instruments and policies

A **list of complementary instruments and policies** has been made available to complement the Code for signatories. Some elements are particularly relevant for SMEs, including:

1. The Code tool on the European Cluster Collaboration Platform (ECCP) (end 2023)
2. The Green Transition Support Database on the ECCP
3. The Europe Enterprise Network (EEN) and its sustainability advisors.
4. Transition Pathway for a more resilient, sustainable and digital agri-food ecosystem, under development with stakeholders
5. European Agri-food Sustainability Cluster Partnerships (SMP-COSME-2023-AGRICLUSTER)

What is the agri-food transition pathway?

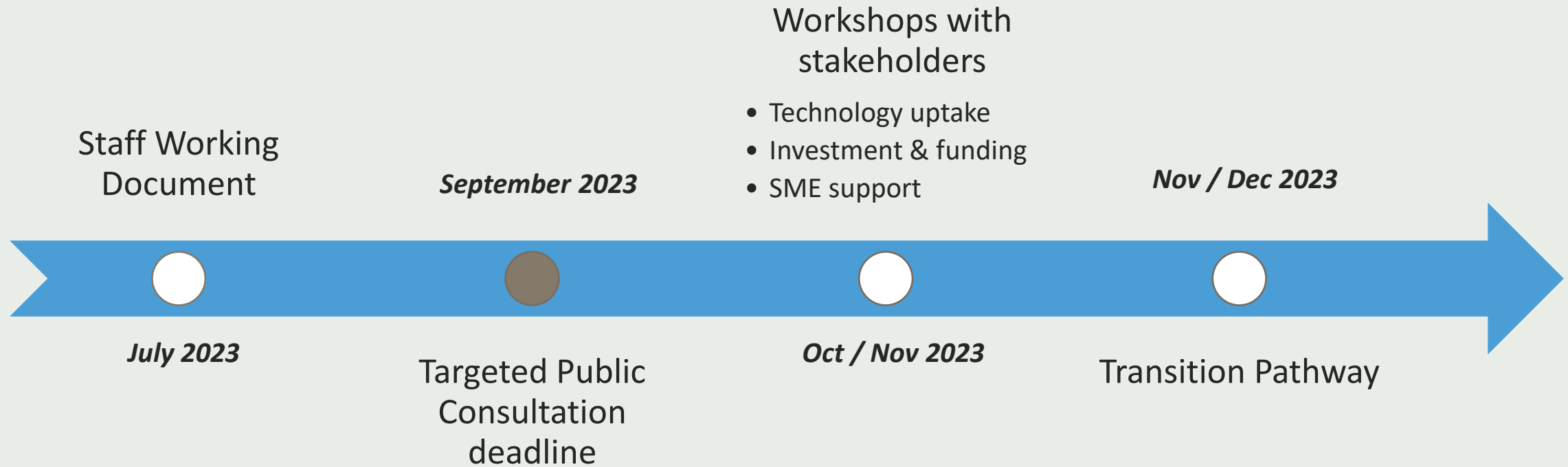
It is...

- ✓ a joint vision for the future of the EU agri-food ecosystem
- ✓ the result of a co-creation process among stakeholders
- ✓ a concrete and actionable plan for the resilience, sustainability and digitalization of the EU agri-food ecosystem

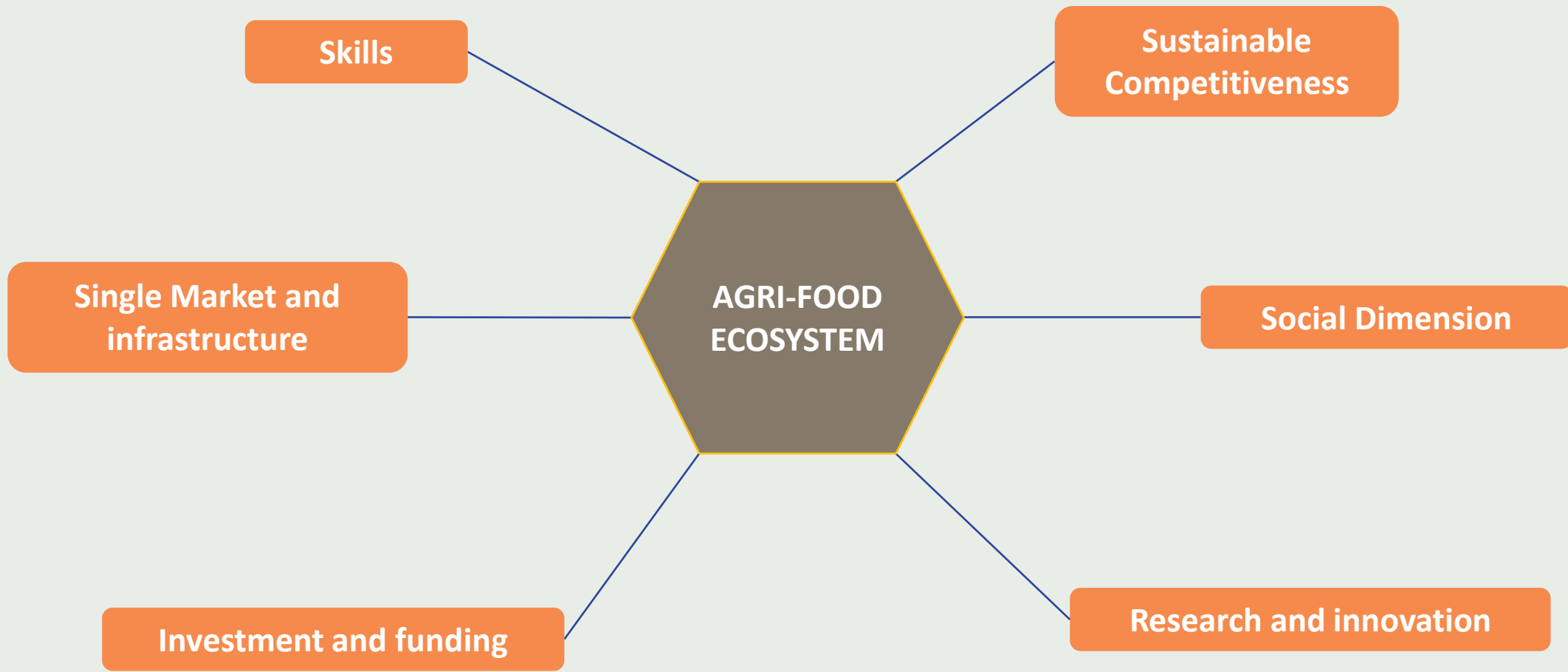
It is not...

- ✗ meant to substitute on-going work and consultations on legislative proposals and other policy action
- ✗ an assessment of existing legislation

Co-creation process of the Agri-Food Transition Pathway



Dimensions of the pathway



European Agri-food Sustainability Cluster Partnerships (SMP-COSME-2023-AGRICLUSTER)

Topic: European Agri-food Sustainability Cluster Partnerships

Programme: Single Market Programme (SMP COSME), Enterprises and SMEs

Management: European Innovation Council and SMEs Executive Agency (EISMEA)

Budget: € 3,000,000 (3-5 proposals under this call)

Publication date: 18 July 2023

Deadline call: 7 November 2023, 17:00 CET

Deadline model: Single stage

Duration: 30-36 months

Link to the portal: [European Agri-food Sustainability Cluster Partnerships \(SMP-COSME-2023-AGRICLUSTER\) \(europa.eu\)](https://europa.eu/eu-portal/agriculture/cluster-partnerships)



Objectives

Main objective: Establishment of new 'European Agri-food Sustainability Cluster Partnerships' supporting the implementation of the EU Code of Conduct by SMEs through resource-efficiency technologies, targeting food processing

Sub-objectives:

Networking: Strengthen existing agri-food industry support organisations

Upgrading: Development of agri-food cluster organisations in more EU regions, support better the resource-efficiency and the sustainability transition of their SMEs.

Capacity-building: long-term sustainability expertise in agri-food clusters, industry support organisations and technology centres on all objectives of the EU Code of Conduct

Themes

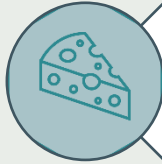
The call for proposals covers 10 themes, proposed for the implementation of specific aspirational objectives of the EU Code of Conduct

Applicants have to choose minimum 1 and maximum 3 themes from the list.

Applicants have to choose at least one theme aiming at improving resource efficiency to directly counter food inflation among themes numbers 3 to 8

It is strongly recommended to consult at least 50 SMEs per partnerships before determining the theme

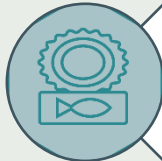
Themes



Improve the nutritional composition and environmental footprint of food products/meals



Optimise and develop innovative solutions to prevent food waste during transportation, distribution, home storage and use



Identify and implement measures to improve the material efficiency of processes



Optimise the use of raw materials through valorisation



Improve collaboration along the food supply chain to minimise food losses and waste

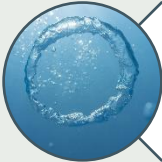
Themes



Reduce energy use and improve energy efficiency for production through the use of less energy-intensive and low-carbon technologies



Increase the use of renewable energy sources



Improve water-efficiency



Reduce net emissions by applying sustainable bio(-economy)-based solutions



Improve sustainability of food and drink packaging

Activities

The **eight activities** listed below are mandatory:

- 1) Selection of agri-food SMEs to be supported
- 2) Identification and presentation of pre-existing best practices
- 3) Definition of a Common Strategic Agenda
- 4) Creating a network of agri-food technology centres
- 5) Appointment of Green Transition Advisors in each agri-food cluster or industry support organization
- 6) Collective support actions
- 7) Individual support actions to individual SMEs
- 8) Communication on the results of the projects and exit strategy

Deliverables

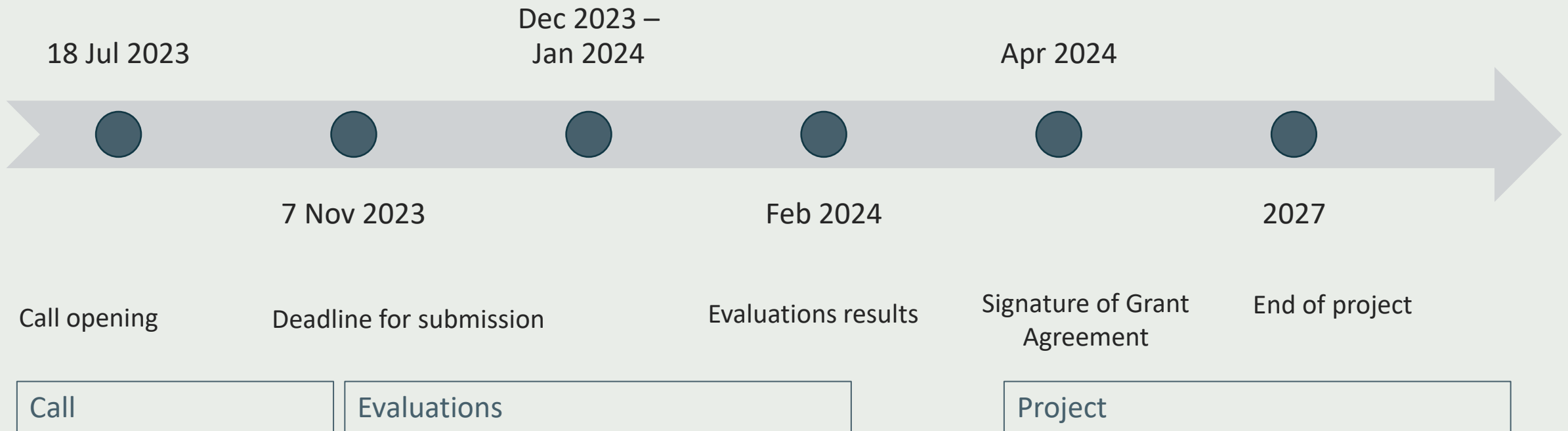
Mandatory Deliverables:

- Catalogue of pre-existing best practices identified (activity 2)
- Catalogue of best practices arising via the SME support (activity 8)
- Conference proceedings of the webinar/conference (activity 4)
- Compilation of the results of the Code of Conduct Webtool assessment by the SMEs (activity 3)
- Common Strategic Agenda (CSA) and roadmap with Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for the implementation of each theme(s) selected by the partnership and including strategic actions on improving resource efficiency to counter food inflation (activity 3)
- Fiche summarising the support provided to each supported SME (1 page per SME or per group of SMEs; activities 6 and 7)
- 2 Technical Progress Reports not linked to payments

SMART KPIs

1. Number of cluster organisations or business network organisations that benefit from the supported action
2. Number of sustainability investment projects
3. Number of SMEs having directly or indirectly benefited (mandatory minimum: 100)
4. Number of SMEs signing Code of Conduct
5. Number of additional agri-food clusters/ agri-food industry support organisations registered on ECCP
6. Number of pre-existing Best Practices submitted to Green Transition Support Knowledge database (mandatory minimum: 10)
7. Number of best practices created through the SME support and added to the Green Transition Support Database (mandatory minimum: 25).

Timeline



Consortium composition

- Primary agricultural producers and the retail part of the agri-food value-chain are not eligible
- Minimum 4 legal entities from 3 different eligible countries;
- The coordinator of the consortium must be an agri-food cluster organisation;
- In addition to the coordinator at least 2 other agri-food clusters or industry support organisations;
- At least one agri-food technology centre;
- Multiple proposals from the same consortium coordinator will be rejected;
- Applicants – other than consortium coordinators - may participate in more than one proposal (but if more than one is granted, would be obliged to participate in a single one)



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