



Single Market Programme (Food Strand)

Call for proposals

Development of non-aversive stunning methods for pigs

SMP-FOOD-2022-PigStunning

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EUROPEAN HEALTH AND DIGITAL EXECUTIVE AGENCY (HaDEA)

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CALL FOR PROPOSALS

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0. Introduction

This is a call for proposals for EU **action grants** in the field of food under the **Single Market Programme (SMP–Food)**.

The regulatory framework for this EU Funding Programme is set out in:

- Regulation 2018/1046 ([EU Financial Regulation](#)¹)
- the basic act (Single Market Programme Regulation (EU) [2021/690](#) of 28 April 2021²).

The call is launched in accordance with the Commission Financial Decision C(2021)3874 final³ and will be managed by the European Health and Digital Executive Agency (**HADEA**) ('Agency').

The call covers the following topic: "**Development of non-aversive stunning methods for pigs**"

We invite you to read the **call documentation** carefully, and in particular this Call Document, the Model Grant Agreement and the [EU Grants AGA – Annotated Grant Agreement](#).

These documents provide clarifications and answers to questions you may have when preparing your application:

- the [Call Document](#) outlines the:
 - background, objectives, scope, activities that can be funded and the expected results (sections 1 and 2)

¹ Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 July 2018 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union, amending Regulations (EU) No 1296/2013, (EU) No 1301/2013, (EU) No 1303/2013, (EU) No 1304/2013, (EU) No 1309/2013, (EU) No 1316/2013, (EU) No 223/2014, (EU) No 283/2014, and Decision No 541/2014/EU and repealing Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012

² Regulation (EU) 2020/690 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 April 2021 establishing a programme for the internal market, competitiveness of enterprises, including small and medium-sized enterprises, the area of plants, animals, food and feed, and European statistics (Single Market Programme) and repealing Regulations (EU) No 99/2013, (EU) No 1287/2013, (EU) No 254/2014 and (EU) No 652/2014

³ Commission Decision C(2021) 3874 final of 04.06.2021 on the financing of the preparatory action "Development of non-aversive stunning methods for pigs" and the adoption of the work programme for 2021.

- timetable and available budget (sections 3 and 4)
- admissibility and eligibility conditions (including mandatory documents; sections 5 and 6)
- criteria for financial and operational capacity and exclusion (section 7)
- evaluation and award procedure (section 8)
- award criteria (section 9)
- legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements (section 10)
- how to submit an application (section 11)
- the AGA — Annotated Grant Agreement contains:
 - detailed annotations on all the provisions in the Grant Agreement you will have to sign in order to obtain the grant (*including cost eligibility, payment schedule, accessory obligations, etc*).

1. Background

There is today two common stunning methods for pigs in EU slaughterhouses: head-only electrical stunning and carbon dioxide (CO₂). Carbon dioxide at high concentration (usually between 80 to 90% concentration) is often used in high-throughput slaughterhouses but it is aversive.

Already in 2004⁴, the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) concluded for the gas stunning of pigs that (underlined added):

In CO₂ stunning, loss of sensibility and consciousness is not immediate but immersion of pigs into 80 to 90% CO₂ usually leads to the induction of unconsciousness within 30 seconds. At a given high concentration of CO₂ (80% by volume in air) and using increasing exposure times, the duration of unconsciousness increases and the stun-stick interval can be increased proportionally without animals recovering consciousness. However, at concentrations above 30% CO₂, the gas is known to be aversive and cause hyperventilation and irritation of the mucous membranes that can be painful, and elicits hyperventilation and gasping before loss of consciousness.

In 2020⁵, the scientists confirmed that this method is aversive for pigs. There are no preventive or corrective measures to the pain, fear and respiratory distress caused by the exposure to high carbon dioxide concentrations as this is inherent to the stunning method.

Regulation (EC) No 1099/2009 on the protection of animals at the time of killing is the EU legislation that regulates slaughter operations. It establishes a list of authorised methods for stunning animals. Carbon dioxide at high concentration is authorised and defined by the legislation as a direct or progressive exposure of conscious animals to a gas mixture containing more than 40 % carbon dioxide. The method is not permitted to slaughter poultry since the industry has developed alternatives that are commercially viable (carbon dioxide in two phases and more recently low pressure atmosphere stunning).

⁴ The EFSA Journal (2004), 45, 1-29, Welfare aspects of the main systems of stunning and killing the main commercial species of animals

⁵ EFSA Journal 2020;18(6):6148

In Recital 6 of Regulation (EC) No 1099/2009 it is mentioned that (underlined added):
(...)

Recommendations to phase out the use of carbon dioxide for pigs and the use of waterbath stunners for poultry are not included in this Regulation because the impact assessment revealed that such recommendations were not economically viable at present in the EU. However, it is important to continue this discussion in the future.

The use of carbon dioxide at high concentration for pigs has been commercially successful because it presents economic advantages compared to electrical stunning. Animals are handled in groups with limited human intervention (low staff costs) and there is a lower risk of blood splashes in the meat (better meat quality).

In its budget 2021, the European Parliament adopted a preparatory action with an overall budget of 2 million EUR with the following remark (underlined added):

The action will include the collection of information on the relevant socio-economic impacts of the most welfare-friendly alternatives, such as, but not limited to: investment and operating costs and return on investment required to shift to the new system(s); throughput per hour; meat quality and safety; occupational health and safety; sustainability. The action will be concluded with a comparative analysis of the alternatives investigated both from an animal welfare and socioeconomic point of view, in order to highlight the pros and cons of each alternative method under a common methodology. All the results of this action will have to be made publicly available. The action will include the publication of one or more scientific papers in relevant peer-reviewed journals as well as technical factsheet for market operators. The action will also include the organisation of a final conference presenting the key findings.

The present call aims at implementing this preparatory action.

2. Objectives — Themes and priorities — Activities that can be funded — Expected impact

Objectives

The main objective of the action is to encourage EU pig slaughterhouses using high carbon dioxide concentration to stun pigs to convert to more animal welfare friendly alternatives. The implementation of alternative methods must take place into slaughterhouses that are using carbon dioxide at high concentration in order to collect data on problems associated with the conversion to the alternatives proposed. The action shall take place in at least three Member States chosen among the six first EU pig slaughtering (Germany, Spain, France, Poland, Netherlands, Denmark)⁶. In the context of this call, the following definitions are used:

Alternative means a stunning method for pigs that do not expose conscious pigs to gas mixture containing more than 40% carbon dioxide. This may include improvements of authorised methods of stunning that are presently not implemented into commercial slaughterhouses. This may also include methods that are not yet authorised⁷.

⁶ Eurostat data, <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/>

⁷ See section on 'Planning phase' of this document with requirements in case of use of non- authorised methods.

High throughput slaughterhouse means a slaughterhouse that has a technical capacity to slaughter more than 800 pigs per hour.

In addition, in the context of this call, “beneficiary” is used at singular but do not exclude the possibility of a consortium. The proposal should describe thoroughly the methods used to inform and involve the different stakeholders at each phase of the action.

For the success of the action, it is recommended that the proposal identifies and involves relevant stakeholders as well as encourages cooperation between EU Member States.

Activities that can be funded (scope)

This call objective can be expanded into the following specific phases or Work Packages:

1. Descriptive phase: the description of the stunning practices for pigs in high throughput slaughterhouses and their socio-economic drivers.
2. Planning phase: the selection of alternatives to be tested as well as the technical and socio-economic data to be collected.
3. Implementing phase: the implementation of alternatives under commercial conditions and the collection of the pre-defined data.
4. Analytical phase: the analysis of data collected and the production of recommendations for facilitating the transition towards alternatives.
5. Dissemination phase: the production of communication materials and their dissemination to the target public.

Expected outputs

1. Descriptive phase

This phase will consist in describing the stunning practices for pigs in high throughput slaughterhouses and their socio-economic drivers.

For that purpose, the beneficiary will investigate the state of play of the different stunning practices for pigs in high throughput slaughterhouses and the reasons for which slaughterhouse operators opted for a specific stunning method.

For each stunning method, the description will include macroeconomic data (number of slaughterhouses, turnover, etc.), as well as micro-economic data based on specific case studies (investment and depreciation costs, operating costs – energy, staff, cleaning, maintenance, throughput), other relevant data (such as meat quality, food safety, occupational health and safety, carbon footprint and other possible environmental impacts – energy consumption, etc.).

The description phase will be concluded by **identifying the main drivers that influence slaughterhouse operators** to prefer a particular method of stunning (speed of the slaughterline, meat quality, etc.) and, identifying, among slaughterhouse operators who use carbon dioxide at high concentration, **the conditions that could encourage them to change** for an alternative method of stunning.

Expected outcome: A report in English collecting and analysing the data mentioned above.

2. *Planning phase*

This phase will consist in selecting alternatives to be implemented as well as the scientific, technical and socio-economic data to be collected.

For that purpose, the beneficiary will establish explicit and objective criteria on which they have selected the alternatives.

The selection of alternatives must, based on scientific evidence, likely to provide an overall improvement for the welfare of animals. The selection criteria should also be based on the results of the analysis of the descriptive phase and the feasibility of the alternatives under commercial conditions. The criteria will be used for comparing the different alternative with use of high concentration of carbon dioxide.

Alternatives must be **innovative**, i.e. completely new (non authorised) methods or new protocols of using authorised methods, not been implemented in a slaughterhouse under commercial conditions for pigs.

Based on these criteria, the beneficiary will select at least **three alternatives** and will select scientific, technical and socio-economic data to be collected during the action.

The beneficiary will define the data and the number of data to be collected (sampling size) in order to address the drivers for change of slaughterhouse operators (e.g. speed of the slaughterline, meat quality, costs, etc.).

The beneficiary will also plan this phase to ensure the highest ethical standards concerning pig stunning and the full compliance with the provisions of the applicable national legislation and of Directive 2010/63/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 September 2010 *on the protection of animals used for scientific purposes* (OJ L 276, 20.10.2010, p. 33). In addition, the beneficiary shall also take into consideration the EFSA *guidance on the assessment criteria for applications for new or modified stunning methods regarding animal protection at the time of killing* (EFSA Journal 2018;16(7):5343).

In case of intended use of an alternative method which is not authorised by the EU legislation, an external independent committee shall be appointed. Such committee shall provide ethical clearance on the alternative method ensuring compliance with legal obligation and ethical standards. Committee members should be independent from the beneficiaries, with appropriate expertise in the assessment of animal welfare standards at the time of killing and slaughter and with no conflict of interest with any of the beneficiaries.

The implementation of alternative methods must take place into slaughterhouses that are using carbon dioxide at high concentration in order to collect data on problems associated with the conversion to the alternatives proposed.

Based on the above-mentioned approach, the beneficiary will provide a detailed procedure of implementation, including the description of the alternative methods or protocols tested, the equipment used, number of animals, the selected slaughterhouses, the data collected, the methodology to collect them and the expected frame to analyse them.

Expected outcome: a report in English describing the planning phase as mentioned above with at least three alternatives.

3. Implementing phase

This phase will consist in implementing of alternatives under commercial conditions and the collection of the pre-selected data.

The beneficiary will experiment the alternatives proposed in the planning phase into pre-selected slaughterhouses and collect the scientific, technical and socio-economic data. The provision detailed above (under Planning phase) for the use of non-authorized stunning methods concerning the external independent committee and the ethical clearance particularly apply to this phase.

The beneficiary will take a series of pictures and videos that could be further use for the dissemination phase and better understanding of the practical setting of the alternatives.

The beneficiary will also record the gaps between the plan and the results obtained.

Expected outcome: a report in English with evidence of implementation of the plan through photos and videos for each alternatives.

4. Analytical phase

This phase will consist in analysing the data collected, comparing them and producing recommendations for facilitating the transition towards alternatives. The analytical phase will be separated into three parts.

4.a) Presentation and analysis of the data

For each alternative experimented, the beneficiary will present in a synthetic way the data collected, the difficulties encountered in the implementing phase and the possible reasons for gaps between the plan and the implementation. Visual materials (photos, videos, drawings) should be part of the report as much as possible.

In annex to this presentation, the beneficiary will provide for each the detailed data collected and their analysis including copies of the publication of one or more scientific papers in relevant peer-reviewed journals resulting from the action. If the scientific papers have not been published at the end of the action, the beneficiary will provide advanced copies of the articles to be published (which will not be released without author prior explicit authorisation).

4.b) Comparative analysis

The beneficiary will compare the alternatives tested with a set of identical criteria that has been identified during the planning phase. The alternatives will be also compared with the use of carbon dioxide at high concentration that will serve as a benchmark.

The comparison must include at least the following main areas:

- The animal welfare outcomes,
- The economic performances (investment costs, operating costs, throughput, etc.),
- The social outcomes (working conditions for staff, need for training, etc.),
- The environmental performances,
- The easiness to convert to alternatives (including conversion costs).

4.c) Recommendations

The beneficiary will draft recommendations addressed to slaughterhouse operators using high concentration carbon dioxide on the most appropriate ways to convert to alternatives, focusing on the drivers identified in the descriptive phase. The beneficiary could also provide recommendations for public authorities on the possible instruments to facilitate conversion to alternatives.

Expected outcome: a report in English describing the analytical phase as mentioned above.

5. *Dissemination phase*

This phase will consist in producing communication materials and disseminating them to the target public. The target public consist primarily to slaughterhouse operators that use carbon dioxide at high concentration. It also include equipment manufacturers, food processors, retailers, veterinarians, official authorities, animal welfare scientists and animal welfare organisations working on the slaughter of animals.

5.a) Production of communication materials

The beneficiary will conceived and develop communication materials mainly targeted to slaughterhouse operators concerned. The materials will present the results of the action through various communication channels including technical factsheets and short videos. All materials will be available in all official EU languages except Irish and Maltese (English that will serve as a template). Videos will be sub-titled. The beneficiary will ensure that native speakers having knowledge of the subject matter check translations. In case of justified complaints by users or competent authorities concerned, the beneficiary will have to amend the materials accordingly. These additional costs will not be eligible.

5.b) Dissemination

The beneficiary will prepare and implement a communication plan in order to reach the target public by using the materials previously developed through the most appropriate means of communication (social media, professional organisation newsletters, webinar, regional workshops, etc.). The dissemination activities will focus on the Member States having the highest number of slaughterhouses using carbon dioxide for stunning pigs.

This phase will in particular include the organisation of a final conference presenting the key findings to the target public.

The proposal must contain alternative ways to reach similar results in case the organisation of physical events is restricted due to measures taken by the authorities.

Expected outcome: a report in English describing the dissemination phase as mentioned above. This will include a copy of all communication materials produced and evidence of dissemination (short summary of each types of dissemination activities estimating the public reached and when).

3. Available budget

The available call budget is **EUR 2 000 000**.

The costs will be reimbursed at the funding rate fixed in the Grant Agreement and will be 65%.

We expect to fund one project.

We reserve the right not to award all available funds or to redistribute them between the call priorities, depending on the proposals received and the results of the evaluation.

4. Timetable and deadlines

Timetable and deadlines (indicative)	
Call opening:	March 2022
<u>Deadline for submission:</u>	31 May 2022 17:00:00 CET (Brussels)
Evaluation:	June 2022
Information on evaluation results:	June 2022
GA signature:	July-September 2022

5. Admissibility and documents

Proposals must be submitted before the **call deadline** (see *timetable section 4*).

Proposals must be submitted in paper **via registered letter**. An electronic version of the proposal (USB) shall accompany the paper copy. The applicant is responsible to ensure that the two versions are identical. In case of discrepancy, the electronic version will prevail. The post stamp date will be considered as the proof of the submission time. Applicants should send **also an email with copy of the post stamp**.

Proposals (including annexes and supporting documents) must be submitted using the forms attached to this Call document.

Proposals must be **complete** and contain all the requested information and all required annexes and supporting documents:

- Application Form Part A — contains administrative information about the participants (future coordinator, beneficiaries and affiliated entities) and the summarised budget for the project
- Application Form Part B — contains the technical description of the project
- **mandatory annexes and supporting documents:**
 1. Detailed budget table (*template attached to this call document*)
 2. CVs short outlines of core project team
 3. Activity reports of last year
 4. List of previous projects (key projects for the last 4 years)
 5. Description of the equipment and facilities foreseen for the implementation of the project.
 6. Description of the appointment procedure for members of the external independent committee to assess the ethical standards on the use of a

non-authorised alternative stunning method. CVs of the committee members if already identified at the time of the proposal submission (if not, to be provided if/when appointed).

7. Legal entity and Bank account form for **all beneficiaries and affiliated entities** (templates attached to this call document).
8. Declaration of honour for **all beneficiaries** (templates attached to this call document).
9. Accession form for **each co-beneficiary** (templates attached to this call document).

Please note that the amounts entered into the summarised budget table must correspond to the amounts calculated in the detailed budget table. In case of discrepancies, the amounts in the online summarised budget table will prevail. The estimated budget that is part of the proposal will become Annex 2 of the Grant Agreement.

At proposal submission, you will have to confirm that you have the **mandate to act** for all applicants. Moreover, you will have to confirm that the information in the application is correct and complete and that the participants comply with the conditions for receiving EU funding (especially eligibility, financial and operational capacity, exclusion, etc). Before signing the grant, each beneficiary and affiliated entity will have to confirm this again by signing a declaration of honour (DoH). Proposals without full support will be rejected.

Your application must be **readable, accessible and printable**.

Proposals are limited to maximum **70 pages** (Part B). Evaluators will not consider any additional pages. Shorter proposals are welcome.

You may be asked at a later stage for further documents (*for legal entity validation, financial capacity check, bank account validation, etc*).

6. Eligibility

Eligible participants (eligible countries)

In order to be eligible, the applicants (beneficiaries and affiliated entities) must:

- be legal entities (public or private bodies)
- be established in one of the eligible countries, i.e.:
 - EU Member States (including overseas countries and territories (OCTs))
 - non-EU countries:
 - EFTA and EEA countries: Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Switzerland;
 - candidate countries;

Beneficiaries and affiliated entities will have to be validated by the Central Validation Service (REA Validation). For the validation, they will be requested to provide documents (Legal entity and Bank account forms, attached to this call document) showing legal status and origin.

Other entities may participate in other consortium roles, such as associated partners, subcontractors, third parties giving in-kind contributions, etc (*see section 13*).

International organisations — International organisations are eligible. The rules on eligible countries do not apply to them.

Entities without legal personality — Entities which do not have legal personality under their national law may exceptionally participate, provided that their representatives have the capacity to undertake legal obligations on their behalf, and offer guarantees for the protection of the EU financial interests equivalent to that offered by legal persons⁸.

EU bodies — EU bodies (with the exception of the European Commission Joint Research Centre) can NOT be part of the consortium.

Countries currently negotiating association agreements — Beneficiaries from countries with ongoing negotiations (*see above*) may participate in the call and can sign grants if the negotiations are concluded before grant signature (with retroactive effect, if provided in the agreement).

EU restrictive measures — Special rules apply for certain entities (*e.g. entities subject to [EU restrictive measures](#) under Article 29 of the Treaty on the European Union (TEU) and Article 215 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (TFEU)*⁹ and entities covered by Commission Guidelines No [2013/C 205/05](#)¹⁰). Such entities are not eligible to participate in any capacity, including as beneficiaries, affiliated entities, associated partners, subcontractors or recipients of financial support to third parties (if any).

Consortium composition

Proposals must be submitted by a consortium of at **least three applicants** (beneficiaries; not affiliated entities), which complies with the following conditions:

- **minimum three entities from three different eligible countries**
- **at least two entities shall be business operators and at least one entity shall be research centre or academic institution.**

Eligible activities

Eligible activities are the ones set out in section 2 above.

Projects must comply with EU policy interests and priorities (*such as environment, social, security, industrial and trade policy, etc*). Projects must also comply with the highest ethical standards concerning pig stunning and with provisions of the applicable national legislation and of Directive 2010/63/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 September 2010 *on the protection of animals used for scientific purposes* (OJ L 276, 20.10.2010, p. 33).

Geographic location (target countries)

Proposals must relate to **activities taking place in at least three EU Member States** chosen among the top six in terms of number of pig slaughtered: **Germany, Spain, France, Poland, Netherlands, Denmark.**

Duration

Project should normally last 24 months (extensions are possible, if duly justified and through an amendment).

⁸ See Article 197(2)(c) EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

⁹ Please note that the EU Official Journal contains the official list and, in case of conflict, its content prevails over that of the [EU Sanctions Map](#).

¹⁰ Commission guidelines No [2013/C 205/05](#) on the eligibility of Israeli entities and their activities in the territories occupied by Israel since June 1967 for grants, prizes and financial instruments funded by the EU from 2014 onwards (OJEU C 205 of 19.07.2013, pp. 9-11).

Project budget

Project budget (maximum grant amount) is EUR 2.000.000.

7. Financial and operational capacity and exclusion

Financial capacity

Applicants must have **stable and sufficient resources** to successfully implement the projects and contribute their share. Organisations participating in several projects must have sufficient capacity to implement all these projects.

The financial capacity check will be carried out on the basis of the documents you will be requested during grant preparation (*e.g. profit and loss account and balance sheet, business plan, audit report produced by an approved external auditor, certifying the accounts for the last closed financial year, etc*). The analysis will be based on neutral financial indicators, but will also take into account other aspects, such as dependency on EU funding and deficit and revenue in

In addition, for a beneficiary requesting an EU-contribution of \geq EUR 750 000 EUR, an audit report produced by an approved external auditor, where it is available, and always in cases where a statutory audit is required by Union or national law, certifying the annual accounts (profit and loss account and the balance sheet) for up to the last three available financial years.

The check will normally be done for all beneficiaries, except:

- public bodies (entities established as public body under national law, including local, regional or national authorities) or international organisations
- if the individual requested grant amount is not more than EUR 60 000.

If needed, it may also be done for affiliated entities.

If we consider that your financial capacity is not satisfactory, we may require:

- further information
 - an enhanced financial responsibility regime, i.e. joint and several responsibility for all beneficiaries or joint and several liability of affiliated entities (*see below, section 10*)
 - prefinancing paid in instalments
 - (one or more) prefinancing guarantees (*see below, section 10*)
- or
- propose no prefinancing
 - request that you are replaced or, if needed, reject the entire proposal.



For more information, see [Rules for Legal Entity Validation, LEAR Appointment and Financial Capacity Assessment](#).

Operational capacity

Applicants must have the **know-how, qualifications** and **resources** to successfully implement the projects and contribute their share (including sufficient experience in projects of comparable size and nature).

This capacity will be assessed, on the basis of the competence and experience of the applicants and their project teams, including operational resources (human, technical and other) or, exceptionally, the measures proposed to obtain it by the time the task implementation starts.

If the evaluation of the award criterion is positive, the applicants are considered to have sufficient operational capacity.

Applicants will have to show their capacity via the following information:

- general profiles (qualifications and experiences) of the staff responsible for managing and implementing the project
- description of the consortium participants
- applicants' activity reports of last year
- list of previous projects (key projects for the last 4 years).
- Description of the equipment and facilities foreseen for the implementation of the project.
- Description of the appointment procedure for members of the external independent committee to assess the ethical standards on the use of a non authorised alternative stunning method. CVs of the committee members if already identified.

Additional supporting documents may be requested, if needed to confirm the operational capacity of any applicant.

Public bodies, Member State organisations and international organisations are exempted from the operational capacity check.

Exclusion

Applicants which are subject to an **EU exclusion decision** or in one of the following **exclusion situations** that bar them from receiving EU funding can NOT participate¹¹:

- bankruptcy, winding up, affairs administered by the courts, arrangement with creditors, suspended business activities or other similar procedures (including procedures for persons with unlimited liability for the applicant's debts)
- in breach of social security or tax obligations (including if done by persons with unlimited liability for the applicant's debts)
- guilty of grave professional misconduct¹² (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- committed fraud, corruption, links to a criminal organisation, money laundering, terrorism-related crimes (including terrorism financing), child labour or human trafficking (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)

¹¹ See Articles 136 and 141 of EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

¹² Professional misconduct includes: violation of ethical standards of the profession, wrongful conduct with impact on professional credibility, false declarations/misrepresentation of information, participation in a cartel or other agreement distorting competition, violation of IPR, attempting to influence decision-making processes or obtain confidential information from public authorities to gain advantage.

- shown significant deficiencies in complying with main obligations under an EU procurement contract, grant agreement, prize, expert contract, or similar (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- guilty of irregularities within the meaning of Article 1(2) of Regulation [2988/95](#) (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- created under a different jurisdiction with the intent to circumvent fiscal, social or other legal obligations in the country of origin or created another entity with this purpose (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant).

Applicants will also be refused if it turns out that¹³:

- during the award procedure they misrepresented information required as a condition for participating or failed to supply that information
- they were previously involved in the preparation of the call and this entails a distortion of competition that cannot be remedied otherwise (conflict of interest).

EU exclusion decisions — Please note that exclusion decisions may concern any type of participation. Entities subject to an EU exclusion decision are not eligible to participate in any capacity, including as beneficiaries, affiliated entities, associated partners, third parties giving in-kind contributions, subcontractors or recipients of financial support to third parties (if any).

8. Evaluation and award procedure

The proposals will have to follow the **standard submission and evaluation procedure** (one-stage submission + one-step evaluation).

An **evaluation committee** will assess all applications. Proposals will first be checked for formal requirements (admissibility, and eligibility, *see sections 5 and 6*). Proposals found admissible and eligible will be evaluated against the operational capacity and award criteria (*see sections 7 and 9*) and then ranked according to their scores.

For proposals with the same score a **priority order** will be determined according to the following approach:

Successively for every group of *ex aequo* proposals, starting with the highest scored group, and continuing in descending order:


- 1) Projects focusing on a theme that is not otherwise covered by higher ranked projects will be considered to have the highest priority.
- 2) The *ex aequo* proposals within the same topic will be prioritised according to the scores they have been awarded for the award criterion 'Effectiveness and rational of the proposed methodology and organisation'. When these scores are equal, priority will be based on their scores for the criterion 'Impact and

¹³ See Article 141 EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

dissemination'. When these scores are equal, priority will be based on their scores for the criterion 'Relevance'.

- 3) If this does not allow to determine the priority, a further prioritisation can be done by considering the overall project portfolio and the creation of positive synergies between projects, or other factors related to the objectives of the call. These factors will be documented in the panel report.
- 4) After that, the remainder of the available call budget will be used to fund projects across the different topics in order to ensure a balanced spread of the geographical and thematic coverage and while respecting to the maximum possible extent the order of merit based on the evaluation of the award criteria.

All proposals will be informed about the evaluation result (**evaluation result letter**). Successful proposals will be invited for grant preparation; the other ones will be put on the reserve list or rejected.

 No commitment for funding — Invitation to grant preparation does NOT constitute a formal commitment for funding. We will still need to make various legal checks before grant award: *legal entity validation, financial capacity, exclusion check, etc.*

Grant preparation will involve a dialogue in order to fine-tune technical or financial aspects of the project and may require extra information from your side. It may also include adjustments to the proposal to address recommendations of the evaluation committee or other concerns. Compliance will be a pre-condition for signing the grant.

If you believe that the evaluation procedure was flawed, you can submit a **complaint** (following the deadlines and procedures set out in the evaluation result letter). Please note that notifications which have not been opened within 10 days after sending will be considered to have been accessed and that deadlines will be counted from opening/access. Please also be aware that for complaints submitted electronically, there may be character limitations.

9. Award criteria

The **award criteria** for this call are as follows:

1. the relevance of the project and the contribution of its expected results to the objectives of the call, (20 points, threshold: 10 points)
2. the effectiveness and rationale of the proposed methodology and organisation (including the timetable and monitoring), (50 points, threshold : 25 points)
3. the innovative nature of the action or project, (10 points, threshold : 5 points)
4. the impact and dissemination of the expected results, (20 points, threshold : 10 points)

For each criteria a minimum quality threshold of 50% is required as well as a minimum quality threshold of 60% for the whole application.

Award criteria	Minimum pass score	Maximum score
1. Relevance	10	20
2. Effectiveness and rational of the proposed methodology and organisation	25	50
3. Innovation	5	10
4. Impact and dissemination	10	20
Overall (pass) scores	60	100

Maximum points: 100 points.

Individual thresholds per criterion: 10/20; 25/50, 5/10, 10/20 points.

Overall threshold: 60 points.

Proposals that pass the individual thresholds AND the overall threshold will be considered for funding – within the limits of the available call budget (i.e. up to the budget threshold). Other proposals will be rejected.

10. Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements

If you pass evaluation, your project will be invited for grant preparation, where you will be asked to prepare the Grant Agreement together with the EU Project Officer.

This Grant Agreement will set the framework for your grant and its terms and conditions, in particular concerning deliverables, reporting and payments.

The Model Grant Agreement that will be used (and all other relevant templates and guidance documents) are published with the present call for proposals.

Starting date and project duration

The project starting date and duration will be fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet, point 1*). Normally the starting date will be after grant signature. Retroactive application can be granted exceptionally for duly justified reasons but never earlier than the proposal submission date.

Project should normally last 24 months (extensions are possible, if duly justified and through an amendment).

Milestones and deliverables

The milestones and deliverables shall be sent electronically to the official mail address (HADEA-FOOD-GRANTS@ec.europa.eu) and will be reflected in Annex 1 of the Grant Agreement.

The mandatory deliverables are as follow:

- **Descriptive phase (WP1)** - a report in English collecting and analysing the data, describing the stunning practices for pigs in high throughput slaughterhouses and their socio-economic drivers.
- **Planning phase (WP2.1)**- a report in English describing the planning phase

and the selection of alternatives to be implemented as well as the scientific, technical and socio-economic data to be collected.

- **Ethical deliverable (WP2.2):** Ethical clearance report on the alternative method ensuring compliance with legal obligations and ethical standards in the case of non-authorized method is/are used.
- **Implementing phase (WP3):** a report in English describing the implementation of alternatives under commercial conditions and the collection of the pre-selected data. Provision of evidence of implementation of the plan through photos and videos for each alternatives.
- **Analytical phase (WP4):** a report in English describing the analysing and comparison of the data collected data and the recommendations addressed to slaughterhouses.
- **Dissemination phase (WP5):** a report in English describing the dissemination phase. This will include a copy of all communication materials produced and evidence of dissemination (short summary of each types of dissemination activities estimating the public reached and when) and participant lists.

Form of grant, funding rate and maximum grant amount

The grant parameters (*maximum grant amount, funding rate, total eligible costs, etc*) will be fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet, point 3 and art 5*).

Project budget (maximum grant amount) is EUR 2.000.000. The grant awarded may be lower than the amount requested.

The grant will be actual costs with flat-rate elements. This means that it will reimburse ONLY certain types of costs (eligible costs) and costs that were *actually* incurred for your project (NOT the *budgeted* costs). For flat-rates, you can charge the amounts calculated as explained in the Grant Agreement (*see art 6 and Annex 2 and 2a*).

The costs will be reimbursed at the funding rate fixed in the Grant Agreement and will be 65%.

Grants may NOT produce a profit (i.e. surplus of revenues + EU grant over costs). For-profit organisations must declare their revenues and, if there is a profit, we will deduct it from the final grant amount (*see art 22.3*).

Moreover, please be aware that the final grant amount may be reduced in case of non-compliance with the Grant Agreement (*e.g. improper implementation, breach of obligations, etc*).

Budget categories and cost eligibility rules

The budget categories and cost eligibility rules are fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet, point 3, art 6 and Annex 2*).

Budget categories for this call:

- A. Personnel costs
 - A.1 Employees,
 - A.2 Natural persons under direct contract,

- A.3 Seconded persons
- A.4 SME owners and natural person beneficiaries
- B. Subcontracting costs
- C. Purchase costs
 - C.1 Travel and subsistence
 - C.2 Equipment
 - C.3 Other goods, works and services
- E. Indirect costs

Specific cost eligibility conditions for this call:


- personnel costs:
 - average personnel costs (unit cost according to usual cost accounting practices): No
 - SME owner/natural person unit cost¹⁴: Yes
 - volunteers unit cost¹⁵: No
 - other personnel costs: No
- subcontracting costs:
 - additional subcontracting rules: No
 - country restrictions for subcontracting costs: No
- purchase costs:
 - additional purchasing rules: No
- travel and subsistence unit cost¹⁶: Yes
- equipment costs: depreciation
- other cost categories:
 - costs for financial support to third parties: not allowed
 - internally invoiced goods and services (costs unit cost according to usual cost accounting practices): No
- indirect cost flat-rate : 7% of the eligible direct costs (categories A-D, except volunteers costs and exempted specific cost categories, if any)
- VAT: non-deductible VAT is eligible (but please note that since 2013 VAT paid by beneficiaries that are public bodies acting as public authority is NOT eligible)
- other:
 - in-kind contributions for free are allowed, but cost-neutral, i.e. they cannot be declared as cost

¹⁴ Commission [Decision](#) of 20 October 2020 authorising the use of unit costs for the personnel costs of the owners of small and medium-sized enterprises and beneficiaries that are natural persons not receiving a salary for the work carried out by themselves under an action or work programme (C(2020)7715).

¹⁵ Commission [Decision](#) of 10 April 2019 authorising the use of unit costs for declaring personnel costs for the work carried out by volunteers under an action or a work programme (C(2019)2646).

¹⁶ Commission [Decision](#) of 12 January 2021 authorising the use of unit costs for travel, accommodation and subsistence costs under an action or work programme under the 2021-2027 multi-annual financial framework (C(2021)35).

- kick off meeting: costs for kickoff meeting organised by the granting authority are eligible (travel costs for maximum 2 persons, return ticket to Brussels and accommodation for one night) only if the meeting takes place after the project starting date set out in the Grant Agreement; the starting date can be changed through an amendment, if needed.
- project websites: communication costs for presenting the project on the participants' websites or social media accounts are eligible; costs for *separate* project websites are not eligible
- EU Synergies call: No
- eligible cost country restrictions: No
- contingency reserve: No
- other ineligible costs: No

 **Volunteers costs** — Volunteers costs are not a classic cost category. There are no costs because volunteers work for free, but they may nonetheless be added to the budget in the form of a prefixed unit cost (per volunteer) and thus allow you to benefit from the volunteers' work for the grant (by increasing the amount of reimbursement up to 100% of the normal costs, i.e. cost categories other than volunteers).

If indirect costs for volunteers costs are eligible, you can add them manually to the volunteers costs category in Annex 2 (calculate the 7% flat-rate on the amount of volunteers costs calculated as unit costs, and then add them on top).

Reporting and payment arrangements


The reporting and payment arrangements are fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet, point 4 and art 21 and 22*).

After grant signature, you will normally receive a **prefinancing** to start working on the project (float of normally 60% of the maximum grant amount; exceptionally less or no prefinancing). The prefinancing will be paid 30 days from signature of the grant by the last party/ 10 days before the starting date /financial guarantee (if required) — whichever is the latest.

There will be one **interim payment** (with detailed cost reporting).

Payment of the balance: At the end of the project, we will calculate your final grant amount. If the total of earlier payments is higher than the final grant amount, we will ask you (your coordinator) to pay back the difference (recovery).

All payments will be made to the coordinator.

 Please be aware that payments will be automatically lowered if one of your consortium members has outstanding debts towards the EU (granting authority or other EU bodies). Such debts will be offset by us — in line with the conditions set out in the Grant Agreement (*see art 22*).

Please also note that you are responsible for keeping records on all the work done and the costs declared. The Grant Agreement contains additional record-keeping rules (*Data Sheet, point 3 and art 20*).

Prefinancing guarantees

If a prefinancing guarantee is required, it will be fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet, point 4*). The amount will be set during grant preparation and it will normally be equal or lower than the prefinancing for your grant.

The guarantee should be in euro and issued by an approved bank/financial institution established in an EU Member State. If you are established in a non-EU country and would like to provide a guarantee from a bank/financial institution in your country, please contact us (this may be exceptionally accepted, if it offers equivalent security).

Amounts blocked in bank accounts will NOT be accepted as financial guarantees.

Prefinancing guarantees are formally NOT linked to individual consortium members, which means that you are free to organise how to provide the guarantee amount (*by one or several beneficiaries, for the overall amount or several guarantees for partial amounts, by the beneficiary concerned or by another beneficiary, etc*). It is however important that the requested amount is covered and that the guarantee(s) are sent to us in time to make the prefinancing (scanned copy via Portal AND original by post).

If agreed with us, the bank guarantee may be replaced by a guarantee from a third party.

The guarantee will be released at the end of the grant, in accordance with the conditions laid down in the Grant Agreement.

Certificates

Depending on the type of action, size of grant amount and type of beneficiaries, you may be requested to submit different certificates. The types, schedules and thresholds for each certificate are fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet, point 4 and art 24*).

Liability regime for recoveries

The liability regime for recoveries will be fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet point 4.4 and art 22*).

For beneficiaries, it is one of the following:

- limited joint and several liability with individual ceilings — *each beneficiary up to their maximum grant amount*
 - unconditional joint and several liability — *each beneficiary up to the maximum grant amount for the action*
- or
- individual financial responsibility — *each beneficiary only for their own debts*.

In addition, the granting authority may require joint and several liability of affiliated entities (with their beneficiary).

Provisions concerning the project implementation

IPR rules: *see Model Grant Agreement (art 16 and Annex 5)*:

- list of background: Yes
- rights of use on results: Yes
- Access to results for policy purposes: Yes
- access rights to ensure continuity and interoperability obligations: No

Communication, dissemination and visibility of funding: *see Model Grant Agreement (art 17 and Annex 5)*:

- communication and dissemination plan: Yes
- additional communication and dissemination activities : No

-Specific rules for carrying out the action: *see Model Grant Agreement (art 18 and Annex 5)*:

- EU restrictive measures: No

Other specificities

n/a

Non-compliance and breach of contract

The Grant Agreement (chapter 5) provides for the measures we may take in case of breach of contract (and other non-compliance issues).

11. How to submit a proposal

Proposals must be submitted in paper via registered letter. An electronic version of the proposal (USB) shall accompany the paper copy. The applicant is responsible to ensure that the two versions are identical. In case of discrepancy, the electronic version will prevail. The post stamp date will be considered as the proof of the submission time. Applicants should send also an email with copy of the post stamp.

The proposal (paper and USB) shall be sent to this postal address:

European Health and Digital Executive Agency (HaDEA)
 HADEA.A - Health and Food / A2.2 Food
 COV2, Place Charles Rogier 16
 1210 Brussels – Belgium

The copy of the post stamp shall be sent to this email address: HADEA-FOOD-GRANTS@ec.europa.eu

Submit your proposal in 3 parts, as follows:

- Part A includes administrative information about the applicant organisations (future coordinator, beneficiaries, affiliated entities and associated partners) and the summarised budget for the proposal.
- Part B (description of the action) covers the technical content of the proposal.
- Annexes and supporting documents (*see section 5*)

The proposal must keep to the **page limits** (*see section 5*); excess pages will be disregarded.

The proposal must be submitted **before the call deadline** (*see section 4*). The post stamp date will be considered as the proof of the submission time. After this deadline, proposals will not be accepted.

Once the proposal is received, you will receive a **confirmation e-mail**. If you do not receive this confirmation e-mail, it means your proposal has NOT been submitted. If you believe this is due to a fault in the submission process, you should immediately file a complaint by the functional mailbox (HADEA-FOOD-GRANTS@ec.europa.eu),

explaining the circumstances and attaching a copy of the proposal (and, if possible, screenshots to show what happened).

12. Help

As far as possible, ***please try to find the answers you need yourself***, in this and the other documentation (we have limited resources for handling direct enquiries):
Topic page (for call-specific questions in open calls; not applicable for actions by invitation)

Please also consult the HaDEA Web (<https://hadea.ec.europa.eu>) page regularly, since we will use it to publish call updates. (For invitations, we will contact you directly in case of a call update).

Contact

Questions should be sent to the following email address: HADEA-FOOD-GRANTS@ec.europa.eu

Please indicate clearly the reference of the call and topic to which your question relates (*see cover page*).

13. Important



IMPORTANT

- **Don't wait until the end** — Complete your application sufficiently in advance of the deadline to avoid. Call deadlines can NOT be extended.
- **Consult** the HaDEA page regularly. We will use it to publish updates and additional information on the call (call and topic updates).
- **Consortium roles** — When setting up your consortium, you should think of organisations that help you reach objectives and solve problems.

The roles should be attributed according to the level of participation in the project. Main participants should participate as **beneficiaries** or **affiliated entities**; other entities can participate as associated partners, subcontractors, third parties giving in-kind contributions. **Associated partners** and third parties giving in-kind contributions should bear their own costs (they will not become formal recipients of EU funding). **Subcontracting** should normally constitute a limited part and must be performed by third parties (not by one of the beneficiaries/affiliated entities). Subcontracting going beyond 30% of the total eligible costs must be justified in the application.

- **Coordinator** — In multi-beneficiary grants, the beneficiaries participate as consortium (group of beneficiaries). They will have to choose a coordinator, who will take care of the project management and coordination and will represent the consortium towards the granting authority. In mono-beneficiary grants, the single beneficiary will automatically be coordinator.
- **Affiliated entities** — Applicants may participate with affiliated entities (i.e. entities linked to a beneficiary which participate in the action with similar rights and obligations as the beneficiaries, but do not sign the grant and therefore do not become beneficiaries themselves). They will get a part of the grant money and must therefore comply with all the call conditions and be validated (just like beneficiaries); but they do not count towards the minimum eligibility criteria for consortium composition (if any).
- **Associated partners** — Applicants may participate with associated partners (i.e. partner organisations which participate in the action but without the right to get grant money). They participate without funding and therefore do not need to be validated.
- **Consortium agreement** — For practical and legal reasons it is recommended to set up internal arrangements that allow you to deal with exceptional or unforeseen circumstances (in all cases, even if not mandatory under the Grant Agreement). The consortium agreement also gives you the possibility to redistribute the grant money according to your own consortium-internal principles and parameters (for instance, one beneficiary can reattribute its grant money to another beneficiary). The consortium agreement thus allows you to customise the EU grant to the needs inside your consortium and can also help to protect you in case of disputes.

- **Balanced project budget**— Grant applications must ensure a balanced project budget and sufficient other resources to implement the project successfully (*e.g. own contributions, income generated by the action, financial contributions from third parties, etc*). You may be requested to lower your estimated costs, if they are ineligible (including excessive).
- **No-profit rule**— Grants may NOT give a profit (i.e. surplus of revenues + EU grant over costs). This will be checked by us at the end of the project.
- **No double funding** — There is a strict prohibition of double funding from the EU budget (except under EU Synergies actions). Outside such Synergies actions, any given action may receive only ONE grant from the EU budget and cost items may under NO circumstances declared to two different EU actions.
- **Completed/ongoing projects** — Proposals for projects that have already been completed will be rejected; proposals for projects that have already started will be assessed on a case-by-case basis (in this case, no costs can be reimbursed for activities that took place before the project starting date/proposal submission).
- **Combination with EU operating grants**— Combination with EU operating grants is possible, if the project remains outside the operating grant work programme and you make sure that cost items are clearly separated in your accounting and NOT declared twice (see [AGA — Annotated Model Grant Agreement, art 6.2.E](#)).
- **Multiple proposals** — Applicants may submit more than one proposal for *different* projects under the same call (and be awarded a funding for them).
Organisations may participate in several proposals.
BUT: if there are several proposals for *very similar* projects, only one application will be accepted and evaluated; the applicants will be asked to withdraw one of them (or it will be rejected).
- **Resubmission** — Proposals may be changed and re-submitted until the deadline for submission.
- **Rejection** — By submitting the application, all applicants accept the call conditions set out in this this Call Document (and the documents it refers to). Proposals that do not comply with all the call conditions will be **rejected**. This applies also to applicants: All applicants need to fulfil the criteria; if any one of them doesn't, they must be replaced or the entire proposal will be rejected.
- **Cancellation** — There may be circumstances which may require the cancellation of the call. In this case, you will be informed via a call or topic update. Please note that cancellations are without entitlement to compensation.
- **Language** — You can submit your proposal in any official EU language (project abstract/summary should however always be in English). For reasons of efficiency, we strongly advise you to use English for the entire application. If you need the call documentation in another official EU language, please submit a request within 10 days after call publication (for the contact information, see *section 12*).

- **Transparency** — In accordance with Article 38 of the [EU Financial Regulation](#), information about EU grants awarded is published each year on the [Europa website](#).

This includes:

- beneficiary names
- beneficiary addresses
- the purpose for which the grant was awarded
- the maximum amount awarded.

The publication can exceptionally be waived (on reasoned and duly substantiated request), if there is a risk that the disclosure could jeopardise your rights and freedoms under the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights or harm your commercial interests.

- **Data protection** — The submission of a proposal under this call involves the collection, use and processing of personal data. This data will be processed in accordance with the applicable legal framework. It will be processed solely for the purpose of evaluating your proposal, subsequent management of your grant and, if needed, programme monitoring, evaluation and communication. Details are explained in the [Data Protection Notice \(link\)](#).