I3-4-BIOFERTILIZERS

SOWING INNOVATION
HARVESTING SUSTAINABLE YIELD

# Interregional innovation investments for biofertilizers and circular bioeconomy solutions for a sustainable agriculture

Call: I3-2023-INV1
Action: I3-PJG
Grant Agreement No. 101161143

## THIRD-PARTY FUNDING SCHEME CALL TEXT AND GUIDELINES

September - 2025

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# GUIDELINES
## AND OPEN CALL TEXT
## FOR APPLICANTS

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

In the context of the I3-4-BIOFERTILIZERS project, FSTP funding plays a crucial role in promoting interregional innovation and investment in biofertilizers and circular bioeconomy solutions. By targeting assistance to at least 30 SMEs and startups, this initiative addresses prevailing market and technical challenges in the field, providing not only financial support, but also technical, business, and innovation advisory services. This strategic funding mechanism is essential for fostering a sustainable agriculture sector by enhancing the competitiveness of regional ecosystems and bridging gaps between developed and less developed regions.

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# 1 ABOUT

## I3-4-BIOFERTILIZERS project

The I3-4-BIOFERTILIZERS: Interregional innovation investments for biofertilizers and circular bioeconomy solutions for a sustainable agriculture is a I3 project, an I3 project, running from 1 September 2024 until 31 August 2027.

The project is being conducted by a consortium of 18 partners from 7 European countries. (France, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Hungary, Belgium and Greece). This consortium involves a variety of both national/regional public institutions and private entities, including higher education institutes, research centres, industry clusters active in agriculture and 8 technological companies/SMEs that bring investment cases to be scaled up. The composition of the consortium is presented on Figure 1.

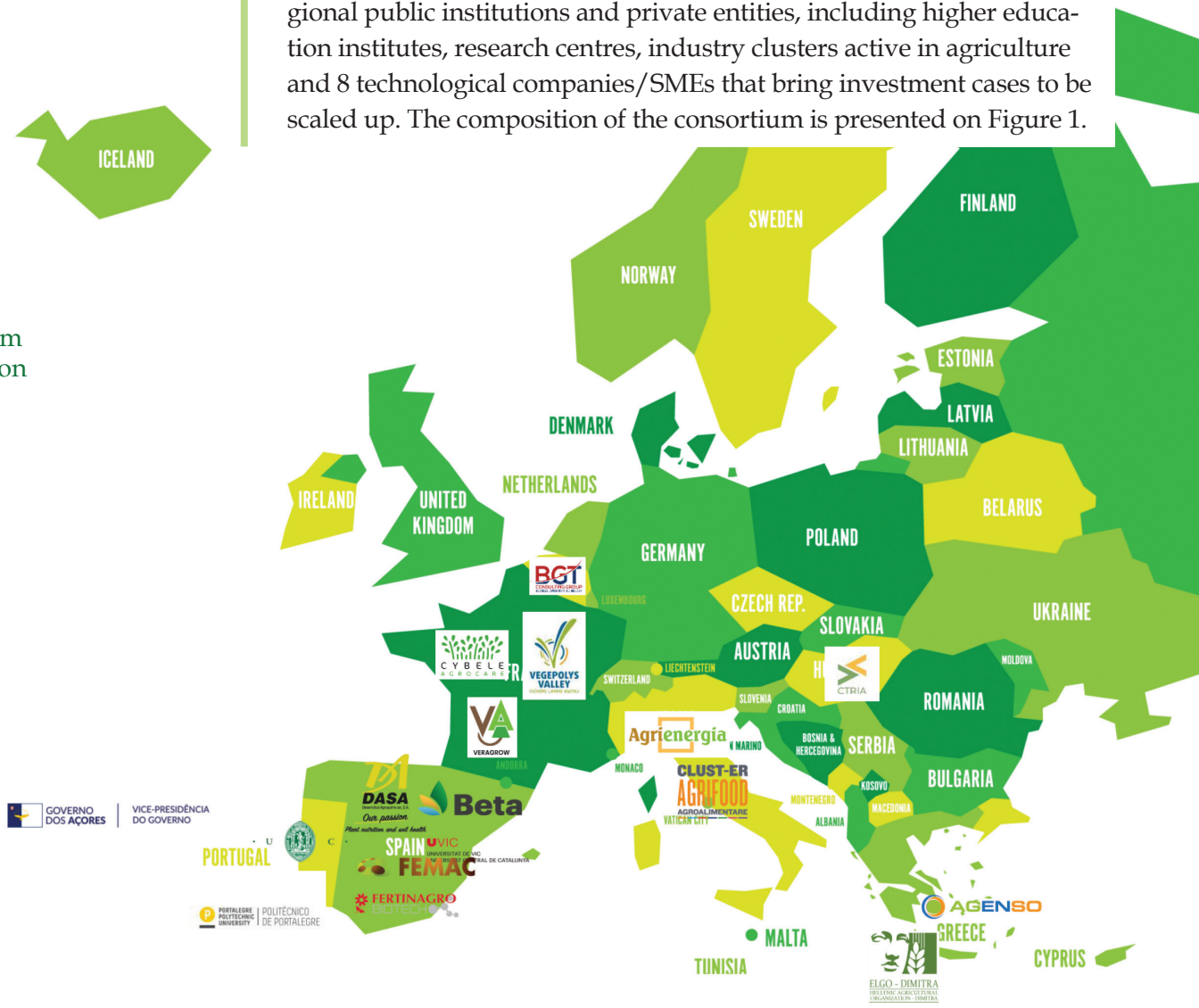


Figure 1

Consortium composition

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# 1. ABOUT

## I3-4-BIOFERTILIZERS project

The next table summarizes the facts about the project.

| | |
|---|---|
| Project acronym | I3-4- BIOFERTILIZERS |
| Project title | I3-4-BIOFERTILIZERS: Interregional innovation investments for biofertilizers and circular bioeconomy solutions for a sustainable agriculture |
| Project number | 101161143 |
| Project duration | 36 months |
| Overall budget | € 9 113 195 |
| Website | https://i3-4-biofertilizers.eu/ |
| Overall budget under the Open Call | € 1.8M |

I3-4-BIOFERTILIZERS aims to promote interregional cooperation to support the scaling-up, demonstration, and go-to-market of a series of innovation investments in bio-fertilizers across Europe. Each identified Investment case (IC) is based on a previous needs analysis that demonstrates the disruptive potential of these cases and their possible contribution, once in the market, to supporting sustainability and circular economy in agriculture. **The project will be addressed along two complementary pillars and areas of intervention:**

- Biofertilizers for Regional Growth: Enhancing regional leadership in biofertilizers to support sustainable agriculture and circular value chains.
- Sustainable Agriculture for Green Transition: Transitioning from chemical to biofertilizers to protect the environment and support farmers.

**The specific objectives that are defined to reach these overall goals are listed below:**

- Ecosystem Mapping and Analysis
- Cascade Funding or FSTP - Financial Support to Third Parties: Central to the project's success, cascade funding establishes a financial scheme to support innovative SMEs in scaling up biofertilizer solutions, bridging the gap between innovation and market readiness.
- Implementation of Investment Cases: Upscaling and demonstrating biofertilizer production, leveraging cascade funding to accelerate market entry.
- Optimization and Capacity Building: Enhancing fertilization processes and supporting SMEs through technical and financial advisory services.
- Market Uptake and Interregional Cooperation: Promoting validated innovations and fostering cooperation to maximize the impact of cascade-funded projects.

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# 2 SCOPE of the FSTP call

## 2.1 CONCEPTS

### BIOFERTILIZERS

These are defined as fertilizing products made entirely from organic matter of biological origin, containing nutrients that enhance soil fertility. Biofertilizers originate from biological sources such as animal by-products (like livestock manure, dried blood, and bone meal), plant residues, human waste (including biowaste from households and commercial activities), and microorganisms. Unlike synthetic fertilizers, biofertilizers are composed solely of carbon and nutrients derived from living organisms, excluding materials of geological origin such as those from fossilized or mineral sources.

### BIOSTIMULANTS

As outlined by the Fertilizing Products Regulation (FPR), biostimulants are products designed to stimulate plant nutrition processes independently of their nutrient content. Their primary purpose is to enhance one or more of the following plant or rhizosphere characteristics: nutrient use efficiency, tolerance to abiotic stress, quality traits, and the availability of confined nutrients in the soil or rhizosphere. Biostimulants work in conjunction with fertilizers to optimize their efficiency and reduce the required application rates. Applied in small quantities, they can improve plant vigor and resilience to environmental stresses like drought and salinity. By complementing traditional fertilization programs, biostimulants strengthen plant defenses and enhance nutrient uptake efficiency.

## 2.2 CALL STRANDS AND SCOPE

This call will be divided into two application strands:

Strand 1 - Tools and services to support the deployment of biofertilizers to support investment cases (IC) of the project (see Annex).
Strand 2 - Open Innovation and scale up of new innovative biofertilizers.

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# 2. SCOPE
## of the FSTP call

**Strand 1:** Tools and services to support the deployment of biofertilizers to support ICs

| Investment Case (IC) | Tool/Service to be implemented | Description of the tool/service to implement | Geographical areas of implementation | Up to max Grant amount |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **IC #1** | Soil and nutrient management using organic fertilizers from chicken manure | Enhancement of soil fertility and crop productivity using chicken manure-based organic fertilizers. It promotes sustainable agriculture, reduces synthetic fertilizer use, and improves environmental health through soil analysis, field trials, and optimized application rates. | Região Centro (PT - Portugal)<br><br>Região do Alentejo (PT - Portugal) | €60 000 |
| | Analysis of market demand for organic fertilizers from chicken manure and creation of a brand | Assessment of market demand for chicken manure-based organic fertilizers and creating a unique brand for commercialization. It combines market research, product differentiation, and branding strategies to develop a viable business model that supports eco-friendly fertilization solutions while meeting farmers' and gardeners' needs. | Região Centro (PT - Portugal)<br><br>Região do Alentejo (PT - Portugal) | €60 000 |
| **IC #3** | Mapping by-products and waste | Development of geo-localized map of organic waste and by-products that will support biofertilizer production and cost analysis. | Any of the eligible regions | €50 000 |
| | Struvite testing with Compost + biochar | Formulation of an effective biofertilizer mixing struvite, a phosphorus-rich by-product of wastewater treatment, with compost and biochar. | Emilia-Romagna (IT - Italy) | €60 000 |

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# 2. SCOPE
## of the FSTP call

**Strand 1:** Tools and services to support the deployment of biofertilizers to support ICs

| Investment Case (IC) | Tool/Service to be implemented | Description of the tool/service to implement | Geographical areas of implementation | Up to max Grant amount |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **IC #3** | Biostimulant Production from Compost | Production of liquid biostimulants using compost and biochar, enriched with additional elements such as amino acids. The objective is to create a nutrient-rich product for sustainable agriculture. | Any of the eligible regions | €60 000 |
| | Compost + Biochar Mix development | The goal is to support suppliers providing biochar for initial fertilizer formulation and testing. The project remains flexible to accommodate different value propositions for the suppliers. | Any of the eligible regions | €60 000 |
| **IC #4** | Measuring the effect of biofertilizers on Climate Change | Greenhouse trials using organic-origin components to evaluate their effects under drought, salinity or extreme temperature. | Catalunya (ES - Spain) | €40 000 |
| | Field trials of biofertilizers adapted to specific crops | Field trials of biofertilizers adapted to fruit trees, vineyards and olive trees to assess the efficacy and adaptability of tailored biostimulants formulations. | Catalunya (ES - Spain) | €55 000 |
| **IC #6** | Imaging the impact of a biostimulant | Imaging of different crops in the field after application of a biostimulant. | Any of the eligible regions | €15 000 |

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# 2. SCOPE
## of the FSTP call

**Strand 1:** Tools and services to support the deployment of biofertilizers to support ICs

| Investment Case (IC) | Tool/Service to be implemented | Description of the tool/service to implement | Geographical areas of implementation | Up to max Grant amount |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| IC #6 | Temporal monitoring by spectral imaging of foliar development after application of a biostimulant | Assessment of the quantity and quality of the impact of biostimulant treatment on foliage development during the early growth stages, comparing treated plants against untreated controls. | Any of the eligible regions | €25 000 |
| | Cross-Environmental Impact Studies | Biostimulant-driven changes in key sustainability metrics (Soil, Water, Biodiversity, Fertility). | Any of the eligible regions | €20 000 |
| | Lifecycle Assessment of Biostimulant Applications | Carbon sequestration dynamics and monetization potential in agricultural itineraries. | Any of the eligible regions | €15 000 |
| | Fertilizer impregnation analysis | Impact assessment of impregnation (coating) of biofertilizers (urea type) on prolonged release and assimilation in the field. | Any of the eligible regions | €10 000 |
| | Agronomic tests on vines | Assessment of the impact of a biostimulant on grapevine cultivation in order to evaluate the improvement in resistance to thermal and/or hydric stress. | Any of the eligible regions | €5 500 |
| | Agronomic tests on vines | Evaluating the impact of a biostimulant on vine restoration of carbohydrate and mineral nutrient reserves (after the harvest). | Any of the eligible regions | €5 500 |

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# 2. SCOPE
## of the FSTP call

**Strand 1:** Tools and services to support the deployment of biofertilizers to support ICs

| Investment Case (IC) | Tool/Service to be implemented | Description of the tool/service to implement | Geographical areas of implementation | Up to max Grant amount |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **IC #7** | Evaluation of a Bacterial Biostimulant on Yield and Soil Fertility in Exotic Crops | Evaluation the agronomic and economic impact of a nitrogen-fixing microbial biostimulant on nine tropical and subtropical crops, including sugarcane, rice, and banana. It aims to enhance biological nitrogen fixation, improve nutrient uptake, reduce chemical fertilizer use, and boost crop yield and soil health. The study will also develop agronomic guidelines and assess the economic viability of this bio-based innovation for sustainable agriculture. | French Guiana, Guadeloupe, Martinique, Mayotte, Reunion Island and Saint-Martin (France) | €60.000 |

**Strand 2:** Open Innovation: Development of new products and scale up of new innovative biofertilizers

This strand aims to scale up innovative biofertilizers initiatives (TRL 6 – 8). The activities under this strand are designed to finalize the portfolio of products and solutions, which may include:

- Fertilizers made from poultry manure,
- Liquid biofertilizers derived from plant co-products,
- Biofertilizers produced from compost and biogas,
- Biostimulants extracted from plants, microorganisms, and
- Biostimulants derived from vermicompost.

This list is not exhaustive and applications on additional topics are welcome as far as they comply with the objective of the strand:

- **Biochar:** Develop products utilizing biochar for soil amendment, or in bio-fertilizer formulation and carbon sequestration.

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# 2. SCOPE
## of the FSTP call

**Strand 2:** Open Innovation: Development of new products and scale up of new innovative biofertilizers

- **Algae-Derived Products:** Investigate the potential of algae as a source for biofertilizers and biostimulants.
- **Insect-Derived Products:** Explore the use of insects as a sustainable source for protein-rich biofertilizers.
- **Proteins/Amino Acids:** Develop biofertilizers based on proteins or amino acids to enhance plant nutrition.
- **Humic/Fulvic Acids:** Investigate the application of these organic compounds in biofertilizer formulations.

This strand supports projects within these innovative product and solutions areas, categorized into the four scopes outlined in the following table

| Scope | Description | Regions to be implemented | Up to max Grant amount |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Scale-Up of Production | Develop strategies to increase production capacity while maintaining product quality and consistency. | All eligible regions | €60 000 (€120.000 for collaborative projects) |
| 2. Innovative Formulants and Formulation Processes | Explore new formulation methods, including seed treatment, physical form tools and methods (granular, pellets, crystals, powder) to improve biofertilizer efficacy and application | All eligible regions | €60 000 (€120.000 for collaborative projects) |
| 3. Evaluation of products | Evaluation of products, regarding their effectiveness in greenhouse or field conditions, Characterization of the mode of action of products, sources of variability) | All eligible regions | €60 000 (€120.000 for collaborative projects) |
| 4. Service-related | Evaluation of products, regarding their effectiveness in greenhouse or field conditions, Characterization of the mode of action of products, sources of variability) | All eligible regions | €60 000 (€120.000 for collaborative projects) |

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# 2. SCOPE
## of the FSTP call

### OTHER ADVANTAGES FOR THE FUNDED SMES:

In addition to the direct financial support, selected SMEs will also benefit from a comprehensive support framework. A network of technical, scientific, and innovation advisory experts will be established to assist them, covering areas such as intellectual property rights (IPR), legal issues, environmental impact, and more. These structures will provide support, guidance, and coaching throughout the implementation of their projects. Additionally, an innovation and financial advisory programme will be developed, offering tailored go-to-market and scale-up support. External experts will be engaged in coaching sessions, based on the specific needs and requests of the SMEs.

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# 3 ELIGIBILITY criteria

The Cascade Funding call for I3-4-BIOFERTILIZERS project aims to support innovative initiatives from small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) across various regions according to FSTP rules under the I3 funding scheme. To ensure a fair and effective evaluation process, a set of eligibility criteria has been established that all proposals must meet before moving forward to the evaluation phase.

## SME CLASSIFICATION

The call is looking for qualified SMEs as defined by the European Union. This means that applicants are required to verify their SME status using the official EU SME self-assessment tool *(https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32003H0361)*.
Start-ups will also be considered eligible for this call, if they have been established at least 1 year before the end of the call date (14th November 2025).

## GEOGRAPHICAL REQUIREMENT

Geographical diversity is a key aspect of the I3-4-BIOFERTILIZERS. Applicant SMEs must be legally established in one of the eligible regions of the I3-4-BIOFERTILIZERS open call (Table 1).

*Commission Recommendation of 6 May 2003 concerning the definition of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (Text with EEA relevance) (notified under document number C(2003) 1422):
*https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32003H0361*

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# 3. ELIGIBILITY
## criteria

**Table 1:** Eligible regions

| Country | Regions Category | NUT2 code | Region |
|---|---|---|---|
| FRANCE | Transition Regions | FRB0<br>FRD1<br>FRD2<br>FRG0<br>FRH0 | Centre-Val-de-Loire<br>Basse-Normandie<br>Haute-Normandie<br>Pays de la Loire<br>Bretagne |
| | Outermost Regions | FRY1<br>FRY3 | La Réunion<br>Mayotte<br>Martinique<br>Guadeloupe<br>Guyane Française |
| | More Developed Regions | FR10<br>FRK2 | Île de France<br>Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes |
| SPAIN | Less Developed Regions | ES42<br>ES43<br>ES61 | Castilla – La Mancha<br>Extremadura<br>Andalucia |
| | Outermost Regions | ES70 | Canarias |
| | More Developed Regions | ES51<br>ES24 | Catalunya<br>Aragón |
| PORTUGAL | Less Developed Regions | PT11<br>PT16<br>PT18<br>PT30 | Norte<br>Região Centro<br>Região do Alentejo<br>Região Autónoma da Madeira |
| | Outermost Regions | PT20 | Região Autónoma dos Açores |
| ITALY | Less Developed Regions | ITF2<br>ITF3<br>ITF4<br>ITF5<br>ITF6<br>ITG1<br>ITG2 | Molise<br>Campania<br>Puglia<br>Basilicata<br>Calabria<br>Sicilia<br>Sardegna |

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# 3. ELIGIBILITY
## criteria

**Table 1:** Eligible regions

| Country | Regions Category | NUT2 code | Region |
|---|---|---|---|
| **ITALY** | More Developed Regions | ITH5 | Emilia-Romagna |
| **BELGIUM** | More Developed Regions | BE10<br>BE23 | Région de Bruxelles-Capitale<br>Prov. Oost-Vlaanderen |
| **GREECE** | More Developed Regions | EL41<br>EL43<br>EL52<br>EL53<br>EL54<br>EL61<br>EL62<br>EL63<br>EL64<br>EL65 | Voreio Aigaio<br>Kriti<br>Kentriki Makedonia<br>Dytiki Makedonia<br>Ipeiros<br>Thessalia<br>Ionia Nisia<br>Dytiki Ellada<br>Sterea Ellada<br>Peloponnisos |
| **HUNGARY** | Less Developed Regions | HU21<br>HU22<br>HU23<br>HU31<br>HU32<br>HU33 | Közép-Dunántúl<br>Nyugat-Dunántúl<br>Dél-Dunántúl<br>Észak-Magyarország<br>Észak-Alföld<br>Dél-Alföld |

### SCOPE PRIORITIES AND ACTIVITIES

Applications must address one of the scope priorities and develop activities as described in section 2.2. Proposals that would address more than one priority will be considered as ineligible.

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# 3. ELIGIBILITY criteria

## FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS

If the proposal is selected for funding, applicants should be able to prove their financial stability and capacity and pass any financial check. This includes completing a financial capacity self -assessment *(https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/lfv/lfvSimulation.do).*

## LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS

To ensure a fair evaluation process, all applications must be submitted entirely in English. Any proposal submitted partially or fully in another language will be automatically disqualified.

## REQUESTED FUNDING AMOUNT

The grant will be provided as a lump sum payment. For Strand 1, the maximum grant amount per type of proposal/challenge is mentioned in section 2.2.1 of this document.

For Strand 2, the total requested grant per SME cannot exceed €60,000. If applications are submitted by more than one SME in the form of collaborative projects, the total funding request must not exceed €120,000 per project. Even if more than two SMEs collaborate, the maximum grant remains fixed at €120,000.

## PROJECT DURATION

The project duration is maximum 12 months starting from the date of the agreement signature.

Each SME may submit only one application in this call, either as a single applicant or as a leader or partner in a consortium. If an applicant submits more than one application, only the most recent (last) one received, will be admissible. All earlier submitted proposals from that applicant, even collaborative ones, will be considered as non-admissible.

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# 4 SUBMISSION

## WHERE AND HOW TO APPLY

- A defined template with specific limits is available at *https://i3-4-biofertilizers.eu/*
- All applications must be submitted before 14th of November 2025, 17h00 CET time, to the following email address: *info@i3-4-biofertilizers.eu* with the following Object 'Application to the I3-4-BIOFERTILIZERS Funding Scheme'.
- Applications submitted after the defined deadline will not be admissible.
- Required documents (SME declaration) and forms (Application form – Technical and budget form) should be submitted in a PDF format.
- The application form should have maximum 15 pages.
- After submission the applicant will receive an e-mail confirming the reception of the application.
- Approximately 2 weeks after the submission deadline, candidates will be informed about applications eligibility.

## WHEN TO APPLY

Applications must be submitted by 17:00 CET of the submission deadline.

| Launch date | Submission deadline |
|---|---|
| **1ST SEPTEMBER 2025** | **14TH OF NOVEMBER 2025, 17H00 CET** |

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# 5 EVALUATION and Selection Process

## 5.1 EVALUATION PROCESS

The evaluation process will consist of three key steps as presented in the figure below. Applications not meeting the eligibility criteria will be directly discarded. The leader of the applications rejected at the eligibility check step will be notified by email.

Only eligible proposals will be considered for the following steps - technical evaluation and consensus group. Each application will be evaluated by a pool of up to 3 experts' evaluators that will be selected previously by I3-4-BIOFERTILIZERS project based on their expertise in the fields covered by the call. The pool of experts will represent different regions covered by the I3-4-BIOFERTILIZERS project partners to ensure a fair and transparent selection process. Following the independent evaluations, a consensus meeting will be organised by the project to close the evaluation process.

For the strand 1, no direct implication of the IC leaders is planned in the technical evaluation; however, a representative of each IC will be involved in the validation of the evaluation results.

The assessment period shall take from **17th of November 2025** to the **first 2 weeks of February 2026**. The results of the evaluation will be communicated to applicants at the end of the assessment period.

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# 5. EVALUATION
## and Selection Process

| ELIGIBILITY CHECK | EXPERTS ASSESSMENT | CONSENSUS GROUP | COMPLAIN ASSESSEMENT |
|---|---|---|---|
| • SME Classification<br>• Geographical Requirement<br>• Thematic priorities<br>• Financial Requirements<br>• Language Requirements<br>• Requested funding amount<br>• Project duration<br>• Timely submission | Each application will be assessed by consortium, selected in phase 1 (Admissibility and Elegibility).<br><br>They will be selected based on their expertise in fields relevant to the program being evaluated, ensuring they have no direct connection to any Investment Case under Strand 1.<br><br>Additionally, they will represent three different regions covered by the project partners to ensure a fair and transparent selection process.<br><br>They will follow the evaluation grid for each strand (see evluation criteria) | Evaluators will convene to discuss their assessments and reach a consensus on rankings for each application. | There will be a dedicated period during which applicantsmay submit complaints regarding the results of the technical evaluation. |

| ADMISSIBILITY AND ELEGIBILITY | ADMISSIBILITY AND ELEGIBILITY TECHNICAL ASSESSMENT |
|---|---|

### 5.2 EVALUATION CRITERIA

The evaluation and ranking of applications will be based on a set of criteria, in addition to the main eligibility requirements outlined in section 3. Two distinct sets of evaluation criteria will be applied to assess projects under Strand 1 and Strand 2 for this call. Separate ranking lists will be created for each strand, ensuring that applications for Strand 1 and Strand 2 are evaluated and ranked independently. The tables below explain the different aspects which will be considered per evaluation criteria per strand:

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# 5. EVALUATION
## and Selection Process

**Criteria for Strand 1:** Tools and services to support the deployment of biofertilizers to support ICs

| Evaluation criteria | |
|---|---|
| Quality of implementation and adequacy with the ICs needs (50 points max) | • Strand 1/ICs objectives alignment and compliance (15 points)<br>• Feasibility of the project (15 points)<br>• Cost effectiveness (15 points)<br>• Team and Resources adequation (5 points) |

**Criteria for Strand 1:** Tools and services to support the deployment of biofertilizers to support ICs

| Evaluation criteria | |
|---|---|
| Excellence (15 points max) | • Innovation level (5 points max)<br>• Feasibility and technical quality (10 points max) |
| Impact (15 points max) | • Expected benefits (5 points max)<br>• Relevance and Need (5 points max)<br>• Scalability and Sustainability (5 points max) |
| Implementation (15 points max) | • Cost effectiveness and workplan (10 points max)<br>• Team and Resources adequation (5 points max) |
| Interregional collaboration – Extra points (5 points max) | The project applicant(s) come from two or more different eligible regions and submit an interregional proposal. |

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# 5. EVALUATION
## and Selection Process

### 5.3 ASSESSMENT AND NOTIFICATION PROCESS

#### SELECTION RULES

- Overall score threshold: 30 out of 50.
- Proposals failing to achieve the overall threshold will be rejected.

#### TIMELINE

- The assessment period will last until the beginning of February 2026.
- All applicants will receive an email with the results. Successful applicants will be given instructions for the next steps. Selected applicants will be required to sign a formal grant agreement.
- The signing deadline is within 30 days after the notification.

#### INQUIRIES AND COMPLAINS

For enquiries or complaints related to this call for projects, applicants have 5 working days from the publication of the list of selected projects and receipt of the notification email to submit their request. Enquiries or complaints must be addressed to the contact point by email (*info@i3-4-biofertilizers.eu)* and should clearly specify the subject of the enquiry or complaint.

If the enquiry is deemed justified, a Technical Committee convened by I3-4-BIOFERTILIZERS partners will review the case within 5 working days, based on the information provided by the applicant. The Committee will determine whether a new evaluation is warranted and will inform the applicant of the next steps. If a new evaluation is conducted, the Technical Committee will review the results and communicate the final decision to the applicant.

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# 6 FUNDING
## Details

### ELIGIBLE COSTS AND EXPENSES:

Eligible expenses and costs must be incurred only during project duration (from grant agreement signing to project end):

- Direct staff costs: no limitations.
- External expertise (subcontracting) – maximum of 30% of the total project budget.
- Travel - maximum of 10% of the total project budget.
- Consumables - no limitations.
- Equipment – not eligible.

These eligible expenses and costs apply to all grants, regardless of the amount funded.

### FUNDING SCHEME

- The grant will be provided as a lump sum payment.
- All payments will be in Euros (€).
- Initial payment: 50% upfront upon project contracting (grant signing).
- Final payment: the remaining 50% will be due upon project completion, submission and approval of the technical report which will assess budget use against achieved results.
- Technical report should be submitted (mandatory) up to one month after the project end date.

### BENEFICIARIES' OBLIGATIONS AND COMPLIANCE

- Maintain records and documentation for 5 years after final payment.
- Make expenses records available for audits, reviews, or investigations.
- Keep original or authorized digital documents.
- SMEs/consortia must comply with all terms and conditions to receive funding.
- Beneficiaries are required to fulfil all dissemination and communication obligations as outlined in section 10 of this document.

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# 7 MONITORING and Reporting

## PROJECT PROGRESS REPORT

The project progress reports help us monitor your running the FSTP funded project. For projects with funding equal to or exceeding €20,000, each participant is required to submit a project progress report at the midpoint of the project timeline (e.g., at month 6 for a 12-month project), calculated from the official project start date until project completion.

These project progress reports should include a brief description of the actions performed, major results and achievements during the reporting period, information on how partners are cooperating with the I3-4-BIO-FERTILIZERS and progress made towards achieving milestones. It should also mention any deviations from the original project plan or any unexpected changes in the implementation of the plan.

## END OF PROJECT REPORT

After the completion of a project, each project participant is required to submit a Final Report submitted up to one month after the project end date, where should be detailed the results of the project. This reporting is mandatory and failure to deliver the document will result in non-payment of the last part of the grant.

The purpose of these reports is to evaluate:

- The degree of fulfilment of the project work plan for the relevant period and related deliverables
- The continued relevance of objectives and breakthrough potential in relation to the scientific and industrial state of the art
- The expected potential impact in economic, competitive, and social terms
- The Beneficiary's cooperation in developing a dissemination plan for project outcomes

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# 8 CONFIDENTIALITY and Data protection

## GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATION COMPLIANCE

The General Data Protection Regulation (2016/679/EU) ensures that data processing adheres to fundamental rights, freedoms, and the dignity of data subjects, with particular emphasis on confidentiality, personal identity, and the right to data protection.

## APPLICANT AGREEMENT

By applying to the Open Call for Innovation Projects, applicants consent to the storage and use of their personal data for the execution of the project's objectives and work plan.

## DATA HANDLING COMMITMENT

The project consortium commits to handling personal data confidentially, with the following exceptions:

- Call Results Publication:
  - Project title
  - Names of project partners
  - Short project description (as provided in the application template)
- Completed Projects Information:
  - Project title
  - Names of project partners
  - Awarded funding
  - Updated short project description (from the Final Report)

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# 8. CONFIDENTIALITY
## and Data protection

### DATA PROCESSING PRINCIPLES

Data processing will be conducted based on lawfulness and correctness, fully protecting applicants' rights and confidentiality in accordance with GDPR principles and Article 24.

### APPLICANT RIGHTS

Applicants can exercise their rights towards the data controller as per Article 12 et seq of the GDPR.

### ETHICAL CONDUCT

Application selection and evaluation will be performed under appropriate ethical conduct, respecting the confidentiality of the information received.

### CONTACT FOR INQUIRIES

For any inquiries, please contact *info@i3-4-biofertilizers.eu.*

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# 9 INTELLECTUAL
## Property rights

The management of intellectual property rights is a key issue in the I3-4-BIOFERTILIZERS project, as the sale and exploitation of the resulting innovations is closely linked to their legal protection. The applicants are advised to arrange for internal collaborative agreements regarding Intellectual Property Rights, the use and dissemination of the results generated by the project teams through the funding obtained via FSTP Open call.

Please note that specific arrangements related to intellectual property will be established during the contractualization phase, through discussions between all parties involved, and will depend on the type of product or service developed within the project proposal. This process could involve the signing of Non-Disclosure Agreements (NDAs) or the elaboration of a collaboration agreement, as appropriate to ensure the protection and proper management of confidential information and collaborative efforts.

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# 10 DISSEMINATION rules

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

**Dissemination is based on the following principles:**

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

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

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# 11 GENDER
## Equality

Beneficiaries/Applicants are encouraged to promote gender balance in project teams and leadership roles, and to integrate the gender dimension into research and innovation activities where relevant, but this is not a strict eligibility requirement for all types of beneficiaries. These measures help ensure inclusive, high-quality outcomes and contribute to the EU's commitment to equal opportunities for all.

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# ANNEX

## INVESTMENT CASES DESCRIPTION

### INVESTMENT CASE 1:

### POULTRY MANURE COMPOSTING

**Objective:** Develop a technological solution to convert poultry manure into safe compost through aerobic composting, aligning with EU regulations and promoting a circular economy.

**Benefits:** Produces a 100% organic fertilizer, improves soil health, and reduces environmental impacts associated with manure disposal.

### INVESTMENT CASE 2:

### NITRATE-FREE CALCIUM FERTILIZER

Objective: Create a fertilizer rich in soluble calcium without nitrates using vineyard by-products and olive oil, addressing nitrogen contamination issues.

Benefits: Offers a sustainable alternative to calcium nitrate, reducing environmental pollution.

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# ANNEX –
## INVESTMENT CASES DESCRIPTION

### INVESTMENT CASE 3:

### ORGANIC FERTILIZER AND BIOSTIMULANT PRODUCTION

**Objective:** Scale up production of organic fertilizers and biostimulants using compost, biochar, and Effective Microorganisms (EM).

**Benefits:** Enhances soil fertility and structure, supports sustainable agriculture practices.

### INVESTMENT CASE 4:

### PLANT EXTRACT-BASED FERTILIZERS

**Objective:** Develop high-efficiency fertilizers from organic sources of nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium using plant extracts.

**Benefits:** Provides a sustainable alternative to inorganic fertilizers, balancing soil microbial life.

### INVESTMENT CASE 5:

### INVESTMENT CASE 5: MICROBIAL BIOFERTILIZERS

**Objective:** Improve the manufacturing process of microbial biofertilizers to make them more cost-effective and reliable.

**Benefits:** Offers a viable alternative to chemical fertilizers, supporting sustainable agriculture.

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# ANNEX –
## INVESTMENT CASES DESCRIPTION

### INVESTMENT CASE 6:

### BIO-BASED PRODUCT COMMERCIALIZATION

**Objective:** Scale up production and commercialize bio-based products in the European agricultural sector.

**Benefits:** Promotes the adoption of sustainable agricultural practices.

### INVESTMENT CASE 7:

### AZOSPIRILLUM BRASILENSE PRODUCTION

**Objective:** Optimize industrial production and field testing of Azospirillum brasilense, a beneficial microorganism for plant growth.

**Benefits:** Enhances crop yields and supports sustainable agriculture practices.

### INVESTMENT CASE 8:

### DECISION SUPPORT SYSTEM FOR BIOFERTILIZATION

**Objective:** Develop a decision support system (DSS) using soil monitoring technologies to optimize biofertilizer application.

**Benefits:** Improves nutrient management efficiency and reduces environmental impacts.