Guide for Applicants (GfA)
Hungry EcoCities Second Open Call

Open Call for Art-Driven Experiments
1st Phase - Call for End-Users

Application submission starts on 15 February 2024 at 09:00 CET (Brussels time).
Submission deadline is 15 May 2024 17:00 CEST (Brussels time).

PUBLIC

History of changes

Date	Version	Author	Comments/Changes
19.12.2023	1.1	FundingBox	All Sections
15.01.2024	1.2	FundingBox	Updates by In4Art
31.01.2024	1.3	FundingBox	Version for PO
12.02.2024	1.4	FundingBox	Final after PO input

Table of Contents

Must Read Brief

WHY this Open Call?

We need a future where we use resources responsibly to produce and consume food.

Hungry EcoCities is dedicated to creating innovative prototypes for products and services in the agri-food sector. Our approach involves seeking artistic inspiration to address industrial and societal challenges in unconventional ways. The project will include 10 collaborative experiments between art and industry, which we refer to **as Paths to Progress Experiments (PPEs).**

HOW do we intend to make this possible?

Through responsible development and deployment of AI and digital technologies to reduce resources used in the production, processing, logistics, transportation, consumption and waste of food.

The PPEs will demonstrate how **AI-enabled artistic experiments** can effectively lead to human-centered sustainable working prototypes for new agricultural products and services. They will increase inclusiveness, explore ethical considerations, and realize technological progress in unusual meetings of minds from the technological, artistic, and industrial world leading to innovative experiences and artistic prototypes exploring alternative futures for agriculture and food systems design. The experiments will be tested, demonstrated, and showcased with the purpose of developing Technology Readiness Level **5/6** (also known as **TRL,** see the definition and stages of TRL [in FAQ](#)) **prototypes** tested in the actual environment of the 10 industrial partners along the **agri-food value chain**.

The PPEs are defined as consortia consisting of 2 entities, so that **one industrial End-User (the entity) and one artist (the natural person) collaborate as a team**, to reach the tested prototyping stage with the project resources and within the established timeframe.

The 2nd Hungry EcoCities Open Call - Call for Art-Driven Experiments - consists of two phases:
1. **1st Phase: Open Call for applications from individual End-Users** interested in improving their product/services design and/or production/processes in the agrifood value chain. By submitting an application, the End-Users will enter a selection process and, if selected, will be invited to the programme and start their project implementation in Stage 1 of the programme. Then the HungryEcoCities consortium will enable a matchmaking process with an Artist partner to form the team and prepare an artistic prototyping proposal for collaboration in the PPE support programme. The team will collaborate in Stages 2 and 3 of the programme.

2. **2nd Phase: Open Call for individual Artists** interested in combining technology, art and science who have knowledge or relevant experience in the food domain. All information regarding the application and selection process for the Artists will be available in the documents for the 2nd Phase of this Open Call - Call for Artists.

The total budget available for up to 10 PPEs (1 End-User + 1 artist) in the **Second Hungry EcoCities Open Call – Call for Art-Driven Experiments is up to 810 000 Euro.**

This Guide for Applicants summarises the main features of the **Call for End-Users**, as a preliminary phase to join the 2nd Hungry EcoCities Support Programme (Paths to Progress Experiments, **'PPEs'**).

- Maximum funding per PPE (per consortium, where there must be 2 entities): up to **81 000 EUR**
- Maximum funding per End-User (relevant for this 1st phase - Open Call for End-Users): up to **45 000 EUR**
- Maximum funding per Artist: **up to 36 000 EUR (**relevant for the 2nd phase - Open Call for Artists. The Open Call for Artists will be announced in summer 2024**).**
- Duration of the PPE support programme for End-Users: **14 months**
- Number of selected applicants: up to **10 End-Users**

Resources for this Open Call, **1st Phase: Open Call for applications from individual End-Users**:

- Guide for End-Users Applicants (this document)
- [Frequently Asked Questions](#) for End-User Applicants
- [Application Form template](#) for End-User Applicants
- [Online application form](#) for End-User Applicants

In case you still have doubts or questions after going through the available resources, feel free to reach out by email at hungryecocities@fundingbox.com or write to us through the [Hungry EcoCities community](#).

1.   Basic Info about Hungry EcoCities

Hungry EcoCities aims to explore one of the most pressing challenges of our times: **the need for a more healthy, sustainable, responsible, and affordable agri-food system for all.**

The ambition of Hungry EcoCities is to accelerate responsible innovation by rethinking the existing technology design and development of agri-food value chains and networks across Europe through the lens of art-driven experimentation and prototyping. Through a series of experiments and use cases, this second open call for art-driven experimentation will demonstrate that with a proper standardization and development framework, European agri-

food business can multiply their capacity to deliver AI-enabled responsible innovation for a sustainable food chain.

In this call for art-driven experimentation, artists and End-Users come together to address specific local challenges for artist-driven experiments conducted in local test sites.

The selected PPEs are expected to work together on a proposal to tackle a challenge in a concrete test site provided by the End-User (e.g., supermarket, bio farm, community garden, production facility, restaurant).

`Hungry EcoCities` has received funding from the European Union's Horizon Europe research and innovation programme under grant agreement 101069990. It is part of the S+T+ARTS programme and consists of 8 partners across 6 EU countries.

The project consortium is coordinated by Brno University of Technology (CZ) and includes KU Leuven (BE), CRA – Carlo Ratti Associati (IT), Studio Other Spaces (DE), In4Art (NL), Mendel University (CZ), NethWork (NL), FundingBox Accelerator (PL).

2.   Summary of the 2nd Open Call Process

The first phase in the 2nd Open Call - the Call for End-Users will be open from **15 February 2024** at 09:00 Brussels time (CET) until **15 May 2024** at 17:00 Brussels time (CEST).

In this first phase of the Call for Art-Driven Experiments, the Hungry EcoCities consortium is looking for **End-Users active in the agrifood value chain (SMEs). All eligible applicants are listed in section 4.1. of this Guide for Applicants.**

The main objective of the first phase of the 2nd Open Call - the Call for End-Users is to find the most relevant test sites in the food and agriculture sectors, demonstrating a potential to experiment with digital technologies.The End-Users will then be joined by Artists with prototyping skills to ensure that a successful PPE can be created.

The selected End-Users will be assisted by the Hungry EcoCities consortium to form the team with the Artist which will further collaborate in the support programme.

Artists will be invited to apply separately in the second phase of the Hungry EcoCities 2nd Open Call - Call for Art-Driven Experiments where an application process for Artists will be launched.

The steps within the 2nd Hungry EcoCities Open Call until the collaboration of End-Users with the matched Artists within the Paths to Progress Experiments are as follows:
1. **Application Form** submission by End-Users;
2. **Selection of the 10 End-Users** demonstrating the best fit and relevance for the project;
3. Application Form submission by Artists;

4. **Start of the PPE for the 10 selected End-Users (signature of the Subgrant Agreement by the selected End-Users)**. Important information for End-Users: the selected End-Users will be invited to sign the Subgrant Agreement, which will last 14 months. For the first 6 months, the end-users will work individually, while for the next 8 months together with the Artists selected in the 2nd phase of this Open Call - Call for Artists. Therefore, the Subgrant Agreement for the end-users will include:
   - relevant provisions for the first 6 months of individual project implementation (milestones, deliverables, deadlines etc) - Stage 1 and
   - requirements that must be met by the end-users to continue the project implementation for the next 8 months - Stage 2 and 3, in particular: achieving the milestones envisaged for Phase 1 in scheduled deadlines; fulfilled all obligations as per Subgrant Agreement; participation in the matchmaking session and matchmaking screening; finding the right Artist matched to the end-user and its acceptance by the Hungry EcoCities consortium; participating as 'coach/ mentor' with 2 finalists-Artists on needs/ fit/ access; preparing the testing environment; signing the appropriate amendment to the Subgrant Agreement, which will include cooperation with the Artist, necessary modification of the End-User Individual Mentoring Plan, and others if required. Otherwise, if the requirements are not fulfilled, the end-users will be invited to leave the programme.

5. **Pre-validation of the Artist** applicants;
6. End-Users´ **challenges and opportunities posted on the HECLab[1];**
7. **The matchmaking process on the HECLab with pre-validated Artists reaching out to the End-Users to collaborate**. The process will also be supported by the Hungry EcoCities consortium;
8. **Pre-selection of 20 Artists** with the assistance of the End-User beneficiaries (2 Artists per 1 End-User beneficiary);
9. **Artistic prototyping proposal** preparation on concrete industrial end-user scenario challenges, with the support of the End-User beneficiaries;
10. **Selection process of the 10 Artists to enter the PPE support programme (1 per End-User beneficiary).** This step will be fully detailed in the Guidelines for Artists.
11. **Start of the 8-month collaboration of 1 Artist (natural person) + 1 End-User (entity)** in the Paths to Progress Experiments (signature of the Subgrant Agreement by the selected Artists)

Please refer to the FAQ for a complete and detailed timeline of the application and selection processes involving both the end users and the artists.

3.   What do we offer?

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[1] The HECLab is the digital environment built by Hungry EcoCities to facilitate matchmaking between testing environments and high potential art-driven innovation prototypes.

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As mentioned before, Hungry EcoCities will fund **10 Paths to Progress Experiments (PPEs) via the Call for Art-Driven Experiments. During the 1st phase - Call for End-Users - Hungry EcoCities will select up to 10 End-Users**

Up to **EUR 81,000 (total lump sum)** will be distributed to each one of the selected PPEs (creating a consortium of 1 artist and 1 end-user), based upon the successful delivery of technical and business reports along the 14-month **Paths to Progress Experiments**. This lump sum will be distributed among the PPE partners as follows:

- End-Users: up to EUR 45,000* (relevant for this 1st phase - Open Call for End-users). Thus, the maximum grant amount that can be awarded to each End-User in the Subgrant Agreement is EUR 45,000)
- Artists: up to EUR 36,000

*Up to EUR 35.000 for End-User beneficiary expenses (personnel, travel, consumables, overhead) and up to EUR 10.000 for subcontracting and dissemination expenses for agreed purposes of the 2-member PPE consortium.

HungryEcoCities will provide to the 10 selected End-Users:
- **A fixed lump sum of up to EUR 45,000;**
- **14-month support programme** to unravel and test the identified issue/problem by the End-User to contribute to a future food system that is more healthy, sustainable and/or responsible;
- Access to **scientific expertise and input** from the Hungry EcoCities scientist group;
- **Artistic experimentation/testing** through art-driven innovation future product/service: demonstration of the prototype in the relevant environment;
- **Access to creative studios** with creative storytelling knowledge;
- Access to the **project tools** from the Hungry EcoCities digital prototypes;
- Access to the **network of the knowledge HUBs**.

The End-Users selected in the second Hungry EcoCities Open Call will start the three stages PPE support programme:

- **Stage 1:** Discovery: Problem definition and solution framing, including the matchmaking with artists, identifying scientific input needs and selecting the Hungry EcoCities digital prototype for testing.

- **Stage 2:** Prototype Development and Test Set-up: focus on collaboration with the artist to prepare the selected prototype solution for testing in the real business/ operations environment of the End-User. Additionally, there will be testing of the Hungry EcoCities digital prototypes (minimum of 1) and scientific input integration.

- **Stage 3:** Demonstrate: Prototype validation in the real business/ operations environment of the End-User to verify the prototype system: existing field testing, prototype iteration and experiment validation.

Applicants can submit a proposal through the following website: https://hungry-ecocities-end-users.fundingbox.com/.

4. Admissibility and Eligibility Criteria

We will check the admissibility and eligibility of all proposals submitted before the deadline via our online application form. All the admissibility and eligibility criteria are listed in this Section of this Guide for Applicants. The projects that do not comply with those criteria will be excluded and marked as ineligible. We will check the admissibility and eligibility criteria based on the information provided in your application during the whole evaluation process.

4.1 Who are we looking for?

We are looking for individual (single) agri-food SMEs[2], including Start-ups[3], registered before the start date of the Second Open Call as a company in any of the eligible countries listed below[4]:
- The Member States of the European Union[5] and its Overseas Countries and Territories (OCT) or
- Associated Countries to Horizon Europe[6].

To be eligible, the End-User[7] must be involved in the food industry, a qualification that will be confirmed through the business code in the registration documents.

The **Hungry EcoCities** consortium partners or their affiliates or employees or permanent collaborators are not eligible for funding within this open call.

4.2 Project Ambition

The End-Users, artists, project partner studios and university experts collaborate on the production of innovative solutions that tackle the selected food industry challenges. The expected outcome is:

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[2] **SME definition**. An SME will be considered as such if it complies with the European Commission's Recommendation 2003/361/EC. As a summary, the criteria defining an SME are Headcount in Annual Work Unit (AWU) less than 250; Annual turnover less or equal to €50 million OR annual balance sheet total less or equal to €43 million. Note that the figures of partners and linked enterprises should also be considered as stated in the SME user guide. For detailed information check EU recommendation: https://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/business-friendly-environment/sme-definition_en   or https://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/sme-definition_en

[3] SMEs must have a product on the market with a sufficient track record and real environment to test in.

[4] The applicants who are 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) are not eligible to participate in this open call. 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.

[5] https://european-union.europa.eu/principles-countries-history/country-profiles_en

[6] **AC as of 15.02.2024:** Albania, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Faroe Islands, Georgia, Iceland, Israel, Kosovo, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Norway, Serbia, Türkiye, Tunisia, Ukraine, for the most up-to-date list please first part of this document.For the avoidance of doubts, New Zealand and the United Kingdom are not eligible in this open call.

[7] An industrial End-User in the context of the agrifood chain refers to an entity actively engaged in one or various capacities within the agricultural and food production ecosystem. Depending on their role, these End-Users can be categorized as input providers, producers/growers, traders, processors, transporters/distributors (including packaging), retailers/chefs, consumers, or waste treaters, all demonstrating available infrastructure and resources for use-case experimentation.

● a novel product or service prototype in line with a human-centred and sustainable approach to innovation.

Irrespective of the outcome, the results of the PPEs need to (1) make the food chain more transparent, inclusive, and sustainable, (2) build connections between different stakeholders in the food chain, and (3) promote more informed and sustainable consumption patterns.

By the end of the support programme, the PPEs will have delivered 10 use scenario prototypes based upon challenges and tested within the industrial use case environment. These artistic prototypes will have reached TRL level 5/6 and are developed in line with a human-centred approach to innovation and with the sustainability goals embedded throughout the development fellowships in dedicated art-industry R&D project collaborations.

4.3 What types of projects can be funded?

For the second Hungry EcoCities Open Call, the selected projects will focus on the art-driven **collaborative experimentation between artists and End-Users** in sectors related to the agrifood value chain.
In this context, the End-Users as applicants in this first phase of the Art-Driven Experiments Call must clearly describe the challenges/problems they want to address and that will become the object of artistic and digital experimentation along with the test site and resources they enable throughout the PPE.
All digital technologies can be explored by the Artists in relation to the challenge and test site provided by the End-User, but in particular Artificial Intelligence.
The artistic prototyping proposal (as described in section 2 of this Guide for Applicants) to be submitted in a later phase by the Artist based on the End-user challenge should address social, business or sustainability challenges in the agriculture value chain.

The proposals submitted in this phase of the Open Call by the End-Users need to describe:
● the identified challenge/problem of the test site within the project objectives;
● the relevance for the food sector & agriculture;
● the potential of the test site to experiment with digital technologies;
● the motivation to collaborate;
● the potential for impact.

The proposals by the End-Users are expected to cover the following aspects:
● Provide a clear description of their activities and facilities and access to test in a real environment, as well as commitment to test;
● Present a clear connection to the food value chain/ EU topics[8] /Hungry EcoCities directions.

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[8] According to EU2023 Policy these are:
1. Governance for food systems change
2. Urban food system transformation
3. Food from the oceans and freshwater resources
4. Alternative proteins for dietary shift
5. Food waste and resource-efficient food systems

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4.4 How to apply?

We know it. Applying to an open call takes time and dedication and we are grateful you take up the challenge of applying to the **Hungry EcoCities** open call. We are here to support and help you understand the process and the eligibility requirements you have to comply with.

- **Be on time and use our system:**
  Make sure you submit your proposal through the online form https://hungry-ecocities-end-users.fundingbox.com/ before the **deadline** of **15th of May 2024, 17:00 Brussels time (CEST)** (admissibility criterion). If you submit the form correctly, the system will send you a confirmation of your submission. Get in touch with us if it is not the case. You need to know that we will not be evaluating any proposal sent after the deadline and submitted outside the dedicated form. Interested applicants must meet the deadline.

- **English language:**
  Your proposal must be written in **English** in all mandatory parts to be eligible. Only parts written in English will be evaluated. If the mandatory parts of the proposal are in any other language, the entire proposal will be rejected (admissibility criterion).

- **Every question deserves your attention:**
  All mandatory sections of your proposal - generally marked with an asterisk - must be filled in (admissibility criterion). Make sure that the data provided is true and complete. This is crucial for us to properly assess your proposal. Conversely, any additional material that is not specifically requested in the online application form will not be considered for the evaluation.

- **Have a European dimension:**
  Your proposal should have a clear *European* dimension meaning all your actions, results and methodologies must be carried out according to European standards and overall, keeping in mind that they can be used in different member states across the European Union once the project is finished. The proposal should be relatable to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)[9] and the European Green Deal (EGD) goals[10].

- **Be exhaustive:**
  Have you answered all the sections of the form? It won't be possible to add any information after the deadline. However, you will be able to modify the form as much as you like even *after* the proposal is submitted, **if it is done before the deadline**.

- **Multiple submission:**
  Though applicants can submit multiple applications, neither team members nor any legal entities can be funded twice by Hungry EcoCities. If more than one proposal with any similar team members or from the same organisation will be among the selected projects, only the one with more points will be funded.

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6. The microbiome world
7. Nutrition and sustainable healthy diets
8. Food safety systems of the future
9. Food systems Africa
10. Data and digital transformation
11. Zero Pollution food systems

[9] https://sdgs.un.org/goals
[10] https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal_en

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- **No double funding rule applies:**
  No costs for the same activity can be funded twice from the EU budget. You cannot be awarded twice for the same project. While filling in the application form you will be asked to provide further details about your participation in other projects granting EU money, in particular with regard to the projects under the S+T+ARTS program. We will investigate potential double-funding risks. Please note that in case of a successful application in another Horizon Europe or S+T+ARTS project simultaneously, when double-funding risk is recognized, you will have to choose only 1 project which you will participate and receive funding from.
- **Conflicts of interest:**
  We will take into consideration the existence of a potential **conflict of interest** between you and one or more `Hungry EcoCities` Consortium partners. Indeed, consortium partners, their affiliated entities, employees, and permanent collaborators cannot take part in the `Hungry EcoCities` programme as applicants or beneficiaries. All cases of potential conflict of interest will be assessed case by case.
- **Healthy finances and a clean sheet are a must:**
  We won't accept entities that are under liquidation or enterprises in difficulty according to the Commission Regulation No 651/2014, art. 2.18. Neither will we accept proposals from entities that are excluded from the possibility of obtaining EU funding under the provisions of both national and EU law, or by a decision of both national and EU authority. We also do not accept entities that are meeting national regulations regarding bankruptcy.
- **It is *your* proposal:**
  Your project should be based on your original work. If not, that's okay, just make sure your right to use the IPR is 100% certain. Going forward, any foreseen developments must be free from third-party rights and if not, these third-party rights must be clearly stated.
- **Acceptance of the open call rules:** to apply for this open call you have to accept its rules and regulations detailed in this Guide for Applicants.

`Hungry EcoCities` planned two online webinars on **February 27, 2024, and April 2, 2024,** about this open call to clear doubts and answer questions live. They will be announced at the Hungry EcoCities Community Space and on the Open Call microsite, so sign up and stay up to date.

5.   How will we evaluate your proposal?

Our evaluation process is transparent, fair and equal to all our participants with a clearly defined complaint procedure (See section Complaints). We will evaluate your project in 4 phases. For this call, we are looking for the best fit for our project and we expect a high number of applications since we are much more concerned with quality than quantity, we suggest that you put effort into how you present your project in the best possible way, providing as much detail as you can, to support us while evaluating your application and identify the main key

points and how it fits with the overall **Hungry EcoCities** scope. Hungry EcoCitites is committed to an inclusive selection process, with an explicit focus on increasing the ethnic, socio-economic, and gender diversity within the project.

5.1 Admissibility and Eligibility Check

Once the open call is closed, we will check whether the proposal meets the admissibility and eligibility conditions set up in **Section 4**. We will do it based on the statements included in your proposal. At this stage, the eligibility criteria are checked against a Declaration of Honour or self-declarations included in the application form. Later on, during the evaluation process, the above criteria will be verified during the whole evaluation process (including the final formal check). The projects that do not comply with these criteria will be rejected.

5.2 IN/OUT Scope Screening

The In/Out Scope Screening will be done by the Selection Committee, which means that each proposal may be reviewed by one partner from the following list of partners: BUOT, IN4ART, CRA, SOS, NTWK.

The overall summary/general objectives of all proposals included in the 'List of Eligible Applications' will be reviewed to evaluate the following items:

- **Scope.** The objectives of the proposal must fit within the scope of the project as described in this Guide for Applicants (GfA), Section 4.3.
- **European Dimension.** The project should have a European dimension as described in this Guide for Applicants (GfA), Section 4.4.

The **Selection Committee** will assess if your proposal complies with the aspects above on a YES/NO basis and will provide reasoning in the cases where no compliance evidence is found.

The Selection Committee will meet to review the partner's assessment and validate the ones proposed, generating an 'In Scope List' and agree on the ones to be excluded.

Be aware that proposals that do not comply with any of the aspects described above will be rejected. The ones complying with all of them will move on to the experts' evaluation phase.

We will inform you about the results of the eligibility and admissibility check and the in/out scope screening.

5.3 Internal/ External Evaluation

Each proposal that has reached this stage will be evaluated by **2 external and independent evaluators and 1 internal evaluator** appointed according to the specific characteristics of the applicants from the pool of Experts.

These are the criteria they will consider to evaluate your proposal:

Motivation

Motivation to work in a multidisciplinary team structure

Motivation to work on tech-driven innovation challenges

Motivation to contribute to the EU and Hungry EcoCities project goals on sustainable food systems.

Fit

With Hungry EcoCities scope and aims

With the Food value chain

Challenge/Problem fit with the possibilities of Hungry EcoCities

Environment

Feasibility of the testing environment

Availability and suitability of the team.

The evaluators will score each criterion on a scale from 0 to 5:
0 = The proposal fails to address the criterion, or it cannot be assessed due to missing or incomplete information.
1 = Poor – The criterion is inadequately addressed or there are serious inherent weaknesses.
2 = Fair – The proposal broadly addresses the criterion, but there are significant weaknesses.
3 = Good – The proposal addresses the criterion well but there are a certain number of shortcomings.
4 = Very good – There is a small number of shortcomings but overall, the proposal addresses the criterion very well.
5 = Excellent – The proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion with no or minor shortcomings.
Each evaluator will produce an Individual Evaluation Report. Your final score will be calculated as an average of the individual assessments provided by the Evaluators.
For each section (criterion), **the minimum threshold is 3** out of 5 points. **The total** maximum score will be 15 points, with a **minimum threshold of 10 points**.
In case of ties, the following criteria will be used to rank the projects, in order:
- The highest score in the Excellence Section.
- Other factors related to the objectives of the call are to be determined by the Selection Committee.

After carrying out the Independent Individual Evaluation, experts who have evaluated the proposals will join a **Consensus Group**, to agree on a common position, including comments and scores for all evaluated proposals. The Consensus Group will specially discuss the cases where there is a significant divergence between the evaluators' scoring. In case no consensus is reached between the evaluators, an additional evaluator will be included to provide an extra evaluation. FBA will moderate it to make those evaluations as aligned as possible.
As a result of the Independent Evaluation, a 'Ranking List' will be produced.

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All proposals that reach the threshold or are scored above the threshold, will pass to the next phase. Please note that we need time to process all the proposals in this phase, so you probably won't hear back for a while.

5.4 Consensus Meeting

Following the external/internal evaluation, a 'Selection Committee' formed by BUOT, IN4ART, CRA, SOS, NTWK, and FBA, will decide by consensus (or minimum ⅔ majority votes) on the "List of Jury Day's participants" to move on to the next phase. The discussion will be based on the ranking obtained as a result of the External Evaluation. 2 External Evaluators from the External Evaluation phase will be invited to attend the Consensus Meeting but in an advisory capacity (with voice but without vote).

Bear in mind that even if it is normally the best-marked proposals that are selected for funding, the Selection Committee may have fair reasons for objecting to the selection of a specific candidate. These reasons can relate to:

- The alignment with the **Hungry EcoCities** goals and scope.
- The ability to achieve the strongest possible impact.
- Positive impact on the agriculture value chain.
- The existence of a potential conflict of interest.

In case a top-ranked application is rejected, we will consider selecting the next best-ranked proposal. Although the **Hungry EcoCities** project aims to select a portfolio of proposals that will result in a balanced outcome among the different application technologies/challenges/countries, the final decision as to proposals approved will be made based on the quality and potential of the submitted applications.

Finally, the exact number of proposals approved will be decided based on the overall **quality** of the proposals (up to 10 in this open call). The 'Selection Committee' will decide by consensus (or minimum ⅔ majority votes) on the 'List of Finalists' as well as the "Reserve List".

After the Consensus Meeting, we will communicate the results to the Applicants.

6. Formal Check, Subgrant Agreement Preparation and Signature

Before you get started with the Hungry EcoCities programme, you need to sign the SubGrant Agreement with the **Hungry EcoCities** Consortium.

The SubGrant Agreement will be signed for a period of 14 months. After the first six months of the programme, you will need to sign an amendment to the SubGrant Agreement due to the launch of your collaboration with a matched Artist. Please review section 2 of this Guide for Applicants for more details.

Before signing the Agreement, you should provide documents regarding your formal status. The **Hungry EcoCities** Consortium will verify them, to prove your eligibility. Please do it within the deadlines that will be communicated to you. If you fail to deliver the requested documents on time, without clear and reasonable justification, we will exclude you from the further formal assessment and you will be replaced with the company from the Reserve list.

7. Our Support Programme and Payment Arrangements

Once your eligibility has been confirmed following the formal check and the SubGrant Agreement signed, you will be an official beneficiary of the **Hungry EcoCities** programme. Selected beneficiaries acting as End-Users will receive a fixed **lump sum** of **up to €45 000.** The lump sum is a simplified method of settling expenses in projects financed with Horizon Europe funds. It means that you are **not** required to present strictly defined accounting documents to prove the costs incurred (e.g., invoices). However, you are obliged to demonstrate that the implementation of the project is in line with the milestones set for it. The milestones (deliverables, Key Performance Indicators - KPIs and ethical recommendations) will be defined and calendared in the 'Individual Mentoring Plan' elaborated at the beginning of the programme. In short, we will carefully assess your progress and the quality of your work during Interim Reviews, not your accountancy. Bear in mind that the lump sum does not release you from the obligation to collect documentation to confirm the costs under fiscal regulation.

Financial support in the different phases is made across the accomplishment of several milestones/KPIs/deliverables. Payments will be made in the form of lump-sum grants as follows:

- **Stage 1 Discovery**

The beneficiaries will receive 25 % of the financial support upon **validation of the End-User Individual Mentoring Plan.** This is planned for the first month of the support programme for the End-User.

- **Stage 2 Prototype Development and Test Set-up:**

The beneficiaries will receive 50% of the financial support upon **validation of the Individual Mentoring Plan, elaborated in collaboration with the Artist.** This is planned for M7 of the residency for the End-User (M1 of residency for the Artist).

- **Stage 3 Demonstrate**

The beneficiaries will receive 25% of the financial support upon validation of the final deliverable (experiment validation), **elaborated in collaboration with the Artist.** This is planned for M14 of the residency for the End-User (M8 of residency for the Artist).

These 'Individual milestones' will be evaluated based on the quality and quantity metrics set up in the 'Individual Mentoring Plan'. The beneficiaries will deliver the Individual Mentoring Plan and the Mentoring Committee will assess it.

The Mentoring Committee will evaluate the beneficiaries' performance at the Milestone Review (established every time a payment is due), according to the following criteria:

- Deliverables' quality. To be scored by the Mentoring Committee based on the Deliverables established in the 'Individual Mentoring Plan'.
- Technical performance indicators. To be scored by the Technical Mentors based on the KPIs established in the 'Individual Mentoring Plan'
- Deadline Compliance. To be scored by the Mentoring Committee.

Each criterion will be scored from 0 to 10 and the weight of each one of these criteria, in the final score, will be as follows:

- Deliverable quality (30%).
- Technical performance indicators (60%).
- Deadline Compliance (10%).

According with this final score:

- **Beneficiaries over the threshold** (which is 7 points) will successfully receive the full payment agreed in the SGA.
- **Beneficiaries under threshold**. The beneficiaries who haven't reached the threshold will be proposed by the Mentoring Committee as candidates to leave the Program. And, if this decision is finally ratified by the 'Selection Committee', they will have to leave the Program and won't receive the payment.

Once the milestones and payments to each beneficiary are approved by the 'Selection Committee', according to the Milestone Review Process, the relevant tranche will be transferred to the beneficiary.

Lastly, for a more detailed payment schedule, you can read our Frequently Asked Questions.

8.   Contact us!

How can we help you?

If you have extra questions regarding our Open Call process, feel free to get in touch with us:

- Ask your question in the Helpdesk space of **Hungry EcoCities** Community
- Send us an email to the following address: **hungryecocities@fundingbox.com**.

In case of any technical issues or problems, please include the following information in your message:

- your username, telephone number, and your email address;
- details of the specific problem (error messages you encountered, bugs descriptions, i.e. if a dropdown list isn't working, etc.); and
- screenshots of the problem.

Complaints

If, after receiving the results of one of the evaluation phases, you consider that a mistake has been made, you can send us your complaint in English by email to hungryecocities@fundingbox.com including the following information:

- Your contact details (including email address).
- The subject of the complaint.
- information and evidence regarding the alleged breach.

Important note regarding the timeline:

You have **3 calendar days** to submit your complaint starting from the day after the communication was sent. We will review your complaint within no more than seven calendar days from its reception. If we need more time to assess your complaint, we will inform you by email about the extension.

We will not review anonymous complaints as well as complaints with incomplete information. Please take into account that the evaluation is run by experts in the agrifood and business consultancy fields, and we do not interfere with their assessment, therefore we will not evaluate complaints related to the results of the evaluation other than related to the mistakes in the evaluation of the first eligibility criteria.

9. Last but not least - final provisions

Any matters not covered by this Guide will be governed by Polish law and rules related to the Horizon Europe programme and EU grants.

Please take into account that we make our best effort to keep all provided data confidential; however, for the avoidance of doubt, you are solely responsible for indicating your confidential information as such.

Your IPR will remain your property.

For the selected beneficiaries, the SubGrant Agreement will include a set of obligations towards the European Commission (for example: promoting the project and giving visibility to the EU funding, maintaining confidentiality, IPR, understanding potential controls by the EC/ECA, EPPO, and OLAF).

The **Hungry EcoCities** Consortium might cancel the call at any time, change its provisions, or extend it. In such a case we will inform all applicants about such a change. The signature of the SubGrant Agreement is an initial condition to establish any obligations among applicants and any Consortium partners (concerning the obligation of confidentiality of the application).

Did not find what you were looking for? [Contact us](#) and we will happily answer all your questions. You may want to check our [Frequently Asked Questions](#) Section.

10. Extra hints before you submit your proposal.

A proposal takes time and effort and we know it. Here are a few crucial points you should read before submitting your proposal.

- Is your project in line with what **Hungry EcoCities** is looking for? Not 100% sure? You can consult this [section](#) as well as this [one.](#)
- Did you present your project in a way that will convince evaluators? Go back to this [section](#) if you have any doubt.
- Is your project fulfilling all the admissibility and eligibility requirements described in the Guide for Applicants? Check again this [section](#).
- Are you sure you can cope with our process of the SubGrant agreement signature and payment arrangements for selected proposals? You may want to go over this [section.](#)
- Do you need extra help? [Get in touch!](#)

Good luck!

Hungry EcoCities Consortium