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# primary

## ANNEX 12 Frequently Asked Questions

Open Call for Financial Support to Third parties as a mechanism to test, promote, validate, replicate PRIMARY business model blueprints and develop new value chains

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### **1. Where can I find more details on the Open Call? Any Guide for Applicants?**

The PRIMARY Open Call kit (with all relevant documents and instructions) can be found on the PRIMARY project website under the Open Call tab (<https://www.primary-project.eu/open-call/>).

### **2. Are single applicants eligible to apply, or is this call meant for consortia only?**

For the PRIMARY Open Call, only consortia of 2-3 partners can apply. Single applicants are not eligible. Consortia with more than 3 entities will be rejected during the eligibility criteria evaluation phase.

### **3. How many applications can one (1) entity submit? And how many of them can be selected for funding?**

Applicants can participate in only one (1) consortium and participate in the call with only one (1) proposal. If multiple versions of the same application are submitted, only the last version will be evaluated.

### **4. Can entities from non-EU countries submit proposals to the PRIMARY Open Call?**

Applicants from non-EU countries may apply if they are eligible under the Horizon Europe Regulation 2021/695 and the List of Participating Countries (Horizon Europe: V3.8 – 12.02.2026) and are explicitly included in the list of eligible countries provided in Section 2.2.3 of the PRIMARY Open Call Applicants' Guide. Applicants from countries not included in this list are not eligible to participate in the PRIMARY Open Call.

### **5. Can successful applicants receive payment in advance after contracting?**

In all selected sub-projects, payments are deliverable-based, meaning that the sub-grantees need to deliver a specific report after the end of each phase to receive the payment (no prefinancing is foreseen). First payment will take place after the submission and evaluation of the first deliverable in M04.

### **6. For how long will the platform accept proposals?**

The platform will open for proposal submission on the 9<sup>th</sup> of March 2026, and it will remain open until 17:00 CEST on the 8<sup>th</sup> of June 2026.

### **7. It is stated that applications must be submitted in the form of a consortium consisting of 2–3 partners, with the following details:**

- **At least one technical partner (the entity responsible for the implementation or validation of the technology),**
- **At least one public or private sector partner (for example, a producer, cooperative, SME, research organization, or civil society organization).**

**In this context, can the technical partner be a university? Or is it expected to be an SME?**

According to the Applicants' Guide:

"A technical partner must have the capacity to implement, operate, or adapt processes, technologies, tools, or methodologies relevant to the valorisation of underutilised agricultural residues, in line with the objectives of PRIMARY. The technical partner should enable practical testing and validation of the proposed solution under real or pilot-scale conditions, supporting the assessment of technical feasibility, adaptability, and replicability."

Please note that the final determination of suitability of all consortium members will be made by the external evaluators during the evaluation process.

**When establishing the consortium structure, should partners from different countries be included? Or is it possible to apply to the relevant call with a consortium formed within a single country?**

There is no such restriction on the consortium's composition. A consortium may be composed of organisations from the same or different countries, provided that it meets the Open Call eligibility criteria. These include forming a consortium of 2–3 legal entities and including the required partner roles (at least one technical partner and at least one public or private sector partner).

**8. Is Turkey eligible for proposal submission?**

According to the Applicants' Guide, the Open Call is open to legal entities established in countries eligible for funding through Horizon Europe.

For further clarification, we kindly refer you to FAQ Question 4: "Can entities from non-EU countries submit proposals to the PRIMARY Open Call?"

According to this guidance: Applicants from non-EU countries may apply if they are eligible under the Horizon Europe Regulation (EU) 2021/695 and the List of Participating Countries (Horizon Europe: V3.8 – 12.02.2026), and if they are explicitly included in the list of eligible countries provided in Section 2.2.3 of the PRIMARY Open Call Applicants' Guide. Applicants from countries not included in this list are not eligible to participate in the PRIMARY Open Call.

**9. I am writing to request clarification regarding the eligibility criteria for consortium composition in the current call. Specifically, I would like to confirm whether it is permissible for all members of the consortium to be from the same country, provided that they meet all other eligibility requirements outlined in the call documentation. I would be grateful if you could confirm whether this configuration is acceptable or if there are any restrictions or recommendations regarding the geographical distribution of consortium partners.**

There is no such restriction on the consortium's composition. A consortium may be composed of organisations from the same or different countries, provided that it meets the Open Call eligibility criteria.

These include forming a consortium of 2–3 legal entities and including the required partner roles (at least one technical partner and at least one public or private sector partner).

**10. Could you please confirm whether applicants are expected to test and adopt your technology, or whether we are allowed to implement and test our own technological solutions, as long as they address the challenges defined in your call?**

According to the Applicants' Guide, proposals are expected to pilot and adapt at least one ( $\geq 1$ ) of the PRIMARY processing concepts (such as biorefinery, fermentation, fibre-forming, pelletizing, or pyrolysis/gasification), and to contribute to the validation, adaptation, and replicability of PRIMARY solutions and business model blueprints.

**Will applicants retain ownership of their intellectual property (IP)?**

As stated in the Applicants' Guide: "Each Sub-grantee shall retain ownership of the Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs) attached to the results it generates during the development process, as well as any other results that do not constitute IPRs. Each Sub-grantee is individually responsible for the management and protection of its own IPRs and shall bear any associated costs. The Sub-grantees funded within the PRIMARY project will be the unique owners of the technologies created within the framework of their sub-granted projects. Parts of their works will be requested to be public for PRIMARY dissemination purposes."

**11. Can a consortium from Albania apply? Or it should be a consortium with EU partners, that will give us more chances?**

According to the Applicants' Guide, participation in the PRIMARY Open Call is open to legal entities established in countries eligible for Horizon Europe funding, as defined in the applicable programme rules and in Section 2.2.3 of the Guide.

Applicants are therefore encouraged to verify whether their country is included in the list of eligible or associated countries under Horizon Europe. Additional clarification is also provided in the Open Call FAQ (e.g. regarding participation of non-EU countries), which applicants are advised to consult.

**12. How strictly is the notion of "rural area" defined within the Open Call? Would peri-urban zones with strong links to agricultural or land management activities be considered eligible?**

According to the Applicants' Guide, activities should be implemented in rural European regions, defined at NUTS 3 level, and specifically in regions not already involved in the PRIMARY project. The Guide does not provide a strict definition distinguishing rural from peri-urban areas. Applicants are therefore encouraged to justify the relevance of their selected region in relation to rural bioeconomy development and alignment with the Open Call objectives.

In general, a rural area is a geographic area that is located outside towns and cities. Typical rural areas have a low population density and small settlements. Agricultural areas and areas with forestry are typically described as rural, as well as other areas lacking substantial development.

**Would biomass originating from landscape maintenance (e.g. wild *Arundo donax* currently treated as green waste) be considered an eligible “underutilised agricultural or agro-industrial residue”?**

The Applicants' Guide specifies that proposals should use at least one underutilised agricultural residue, including examples such as crop residues, pruning biomass, greenhouse by-products, or grass/silage. It also allows for the use of similar feedstocks, provided that their characteristics and valorisation pathways are comparable and aligned with the project's objectives. Applicants are therefore encouraged to demonstrate how their proposed biomass fits within this scope and contributes to sustainable biomass utilisation.

**Would partnerships with actors such as natural reserves, public land managers, or green maintenance companies be considered relevant partners within a consortium?**

The Open Call requires consortia of 2–3 legal entities, including at least one technical partner and at least one partner acting as an end user (from the public or private sector). Any organisation whose role and activities align with the requirements and descriptions outlined in the Applicants' Guide may be considered eligible to participate. Applicants are expected to form relevant partnerships that support the implementation and validation of the proposed value chain, and to clearly justify the role of each partner in the consortium.

**To what extent must projects rely on PRIMARY-developed technologies? Is it acceptable to use our own processing technology (in our case, a proprietary defibration and pressing process for producing bio-based panels) while aligning with a broader category such as “fibre-forming technology”?**

As per the Applicants' Guide, proposals should incorporate at least one of the defined PRIMARY processing concepts and contribute to the validation, adaptation, and replicability of PRIMARY solutions and business model blueprints. At the same time, the Open Call foresees adaptation to local conditions and contexts. Applicants are therefore encouraged to explain how their proposed approach aligns with the relevant PRIMARY processing concept(s) and contributes to the overall objectives of the call.

**We are developing a proprietary material and process, and need clarity on how IP is handled within the framework of the Open Call.**

The Applicants' Guide states that intellectual property rights related to the sub-granted projects remain with the respective project partners, subject to the applicable contractual framework and obligations. Applicants are encouraged to review the relevant sections on IPR ownership and obligations, as well as the indicative Sub-grant Agreement, for further details.

**Are projects expected to include full pilot-scale demonstrations, or can they focus on structuring and validating a value chain (e.g. supply chain organisation, stakeholder engagement, business model validation)?**

The Open Call aims to support projects that test, adapt, and validate processing solutions and business model blueprints under real conditions, generating evidence on technical feasibility, economic viability, and replicability. Applicants are therefore encouraged to design proposals that demonstrate a clear implementation and validation approach, while also addressing value chain development and business model aspects, in line with the objectives described in the Applicants' Guide.

Please note that the final assessment of the suitability of the consortium composition and partners will be performed by the external evaluators during the evaluation process.

**13. Could you please confirm whether a private non-profit RTO is eligible to participate as a partner in a consortium?**

According to the Applicants' Guide, the PRIMARY Open Call is open to legal entities established in countries eligible for Horizon Europe funding, including organisations such as universities, research organisations, SMEs, start-ups, cooperatives, NGOs, and other relevant actors involved in the sustainable valorisation of agricultural residues.

Additionally, the Open Call requires that proposals are submitted by consortia of 2–3 legal entities, including at least one technical partner and at least one private or public sector partner acting as an end user.

In this context, organisations whose role and activities align with the requirements and descriptions outlined in the Applicants' Guide may be considered eligible to participate

Please note that the final assessment of the suitability of the consortium composition and partners will be performed by the external evaluators during the evaluation process.

**14. Do you offer matchmaking services in this context, e.g. would it be possible to get to know about consortia looking for (a) partner(s)?**

The PRIMARY Open Call does not include a dedicated matchmaking service.

According to the Applicants' Guide, proposals must be submitted by consortia of 2–3 partners, which are expected to be formed by the applicants themselves prior to submission.

Applicants are therefore encouraged to identify and establish their own partnerships through their existing networks, professional contacts, or relevant sectoral platforms.

### **Do project consortia need to be cross-border?**

The Applicants' Guide does not specify any requirement for consortia to be cross-border. Therefore, applicants are encouraged to form consortia that best support the implementation and validation of their proposed project, in line with the Open Call objectives and eligibility criteria.

### **15. Can we apply for this open call (Primary) from Bangladesh?**

According to the Applicants' Guide, participation in the PRIMARY Open Call is open to legal entities established in countries eligible for Horizon Europe funding, as defined in the applicable programme rules and in Section 2.2.3 of the Guide.

For further clarification, we kindly refer you to the Open Call FAQ (Question 4), which states that applicants from non-EU countries may participate only if they are eligible under the Horizon Europe Regulation (EU) 2021/695 and included in the list of participating countries. Applicants from countries not included in this list are not eligible to participate.

Applicants are therefore encouraged to verify whether their country is included in the list of eligible or associated countries under Horizon Europe.

### **16. Should we apply if it's for Africa, not Europe?**

According to the Applicants' Guide, the PRIMARY Open Call supports projects that are implemented in rural European regions, with the aim of validating and replicating solutions within the European context.

Applicants are therefore expected to design proposals that align with this geographical scope, including the implementation of activities and validation of solutions within eligible European regions.

Additionally, we encourage you to carefully review the scope and objectives of the Open Call to assess whether your proposed project aligns with these requirements.

### **17. Hello, we have a question regarding the eligible processing technologies. Using pyrolysis, we produce both biochar and wood vinegar (pyroligneous**

acid). From the latter, we are able to extract molecules that serve as precursors for plastic materials. Would this approach be eligible under this open call, or are we required to focus specifically on particle boards?

According to the Applicants' Guide, proposals are expected to incorporate at least one ( $\geq 1$ ) of the PRIMARY processing concepts, which include technologies such as pyrolysis/gasification, biorefinery processes, submerged and solid state fermentation, fibre-forming, or pelletizing. The Open Call does not prescribe specific end-products (such as particle boards). Instead, it focuses on the validation, adaptation, and replicability of processing concepts and value chains based on underutilised agricultural residues. Applicants are therefore encouraged to demonstrate how their proposed approach aligns with the relevant PRIMARY processing concept (e.g. pyrolysis), and how it contributes to the objectives of the Open Call, including technical feasibility, economic viability, and value chain development.

The final assessment of alignment and eligibility will be carried out by independent external experts during the evaluation process.

**18. I was wondering if algae biomass (micro/macro) was eligible as feedstock for the open call? Indeed, it can be a residue in some cases.**

According to the Applicants' Guide, proposals should use at least one ( $\geq 1$ ) underutilised agricultural residue, including examples such as cotton by-products, olive tree pruning, greenhouse residues, or grass.

The Guide also allows for the use of similar feedstocks, provided that their characteristics, availability, and valorisation pathways are comparable and aligned with the objectives of the Open Call.

Applicants are therefore encouraged to carefully assess and justify how their proposed feedstock fits within the definition of underutilised agricultural residues and aligns with the scope and objectives of PRIMARY.

The final determination of eligibility will be made by the external evaluators during the evaluation process.

**19. My question is about consortia. Should the consortium members be from different countries?**

According to the Applicants' Guide, proposals must be submitted by consortia of 2–3 legal entities fulfilling the required partner roles.

The Guide does not specify any requirement for consortia to be composed of partners from different countries. Applicants are therefore encouraged to form consortia that best support the implementation and validation of their proposed project, in line with the Open Call objectives and eligibility criteria.

**20. Shall private company apply solely?**

According to the Applicants' Guide, proposals must be submitted by a consortium of 2–3 legal entities.

Therefore, applications from a single organisation (including a private company applying alone) are not in line with the submission requirements. Applicants are expected to form a consortium that fulfils the required partner roles as described in the Guide.

**21. Can all members of a consortium be from Lebanon?**

According to the Applicants' Guide, participation in the Open Call is open to legal entities established in countries eligible for Horizon Europe funding, as defined in the applicable programme rules and in Section 2.2.3 of the Guide. Applicants are therefore encouraged to verify whether their country is included in the list of eligible or associated countries under Horizon Europe. The final determination of eligibility will be carried out during the eligibility check.

**Is there a preference or benefit for a consortium to include at least one EU partner?**

The Applicants' Guide does not specify any preference or advantage related to the geographical composition of the consortium. Proposals are evaluated based on the criteria described in the Guide, provided that all eligibility requirements are met.

**Can the proposed project be implemented directly in Lebanon?**

According to the Applicants' Guide, projects funded under the Open Call are expected to be implemented in rural European regions that are not already involved in the PRIMARY project.

Applicants are therefore encouraged to ensure that their proposed activities and implementation location align with this requirement.

**22. Do partners need to financially match or co-fund the grant?**

According to the Applicants' Guide, the financial support provided through the Open Call is granted as a lump sum, linked to the completion of specific phases and deliverables of the sub-project.

The Guide does not specify a requirement for applicants to provide co-funding or financial matching. Applicants are therefore encouraged to carefully review the conditions described in the Applicants' Guide and the Sub-grant Agreement for the detailed financial provisions.

**Do partners need to financially contribute to the project?**

The Open Call funding is designed to support the implementation of the proposed activities through the defined lump-sum mechanism. Therefore, no financial contribution is required from any consortium member, as the Open Call provides 100% funding for eligible costs.

**23. I am writing to inquire about the eligibility criteria for the PRIMARY Open Call regarding sustainable agricultural waste valorisation.**

**We are currently developing a circular bioeconomy project focused on the valorisation of seaweed captured near beaches as waste. Our goal is to transform this underutilised coastal/marine biomass into valuable products.**

**While we note that your call focuses heavily on rural economies, farmers, and terrestrial agricultural residues, we wanted to clarify if our feedstock—beach-cast seaweed—could be considered an eligible biomass under your guidelines. Since our project aligns closely with the PRIMARY call's broader objectives of circular economy, waste beneficiation, and bioeconomy innovations, we would love to know if a consortium built around this feedstock would be eligible to apply.**

**Could you please confirm if projects utilizing marine/coastal waste as their primary feedstock fall within the acceptable scope for this funding opportunity?**

According to the Applicants' Guide, proposals should use at least one ( $\geq 1$ ) underutilised agricultural residue, including grass, greenhouse residues, cotton by-products, and olive tree prunings, or similar feedstocks, such as crop residues (e.g. cotton stalks, cereal straw), pruning biomass (e.g. olive, vineyard), greenhouse by-products (e.g. stems/leaves), or grass/silage, provided that their characteristics, availability, and valorisation pathways are comparable and aligned with the objectives of the Open Call.

Applicants are therefore encouraged to carefully assess and justify how their proposed feedstock fits within the definition of underutilised agricultural residues and how it aligns with the scope and objectives of PRIMARY, particularly in relation to rural bioeconomy value chains.

The final determination of eligibility and scope alignment will be carried out during the eligibility check and evaluation process by independent evaluators.

**24. We would be grateful for your clarification regarding the countries eligible for the implementation of sub-project activities.**

**Section 2.2.3 outlines the countries whose legal entities are eligible to participate in the Open Call. However, we would like to understand whether the implementation of sub-project activities — including pilot demonstrations, feedstock valorisation trials, and business model validation — is restricted to EU Member States only, or whether it may extend to Horizon Europe Associated Countries, in accordance with the Horizon Europe rules for participation.**

**In this regard, we would appreciate your guidance on whether such activities could be carried out in countries such as Ukraine (excluding non-government-controlled territories), Moldova, and Armenia, given that these countries have active association agreements with Horizon Europe that have started to produce legal effects.**

According to the Applicants' Guide, participation in the Open Call is open to legal entities "established and based in one of the EU Member States or an HE Associated country as defined in HE rules for participation (Section 2.2.3.)".

Regarding the implementation of sub-project activities, the Applicants' Guide specifies that projects are expected to be carried out in rural European regions (NUTS 3 level) that are not already involved in the PRIMARY project.

The Guide does not explicitly distinguish between EU Member States and Horizon Europe Associated Countries in terms of implementation locations. Applicants are therefore encouraged to ensure alignment with both the geographical scope of the Open Call (European regions) and the Horizon Europe eligibility framework, and to clearly justify the proposed implementation context in their application.

The final determination of eligibility and compliance with geographical requirements will be carried out during the eligibility check and evaluation process by independent evaluators.

**25. I am interested in building a pilot biorefinery according to PRIMARY, but I was wondering if grass applies to all fibrous forages for ruminants? If not, how do you define grass?**

According to the Applicants' Guide, eligible feedstocks include specific streams such as grass, greenhouse residues, cotton by-products, and olive tree prunings, as well as similar underutilised agricultural residues, provided that their characteristics, availability, and valorisation pathways are comparable and aligned with the objectives of the Open Call.

The Guide does not provide a more detailed or technical definition of "grass." Applicants are therefore encouraged to clearly describe and justify their selected feedstock within the proposal, including how it aligns with the scope of underutilised agricultural residues and contributes to the objectives of PRIMARY.

The final determination of alignment and eligibility will be carried out during the eligibility check and evaluation process by independent evaluators.

**26. Could you please advise on the best way to find or join a consortium for this call? Are there recommended platforms, partner search tools or networking events associated with PRIMARY?**

Please note that PRIMARY does not provide matchmaking or partner search services for the Open Call. Applicants are expected to identify and establish their consortiums independently, based on their networks and relevant stakeholders.

**Does the consortium need to consist of partners from the same country or is it encouraged/required to include partners from different countries?**

According to the Applicants' Guide, proposals must be submitted by consortia of 2–3 legal entities fulfilling the required partner roles.

The Guide does not specify any requirement for consortia to include partners from different countries. Applicants are therefore encouraged to form consortia that best support the implementation and validation of their proposed project, in line with the Open Call objectives and eligibility criteria.

**27. My colleague drew my attention to your initiative. It may well meet your criteria. However, we are not based in Finland or Greece. Is this out of the question for us, or can we discuss it?**

According to the Applicants' Guide, participation in the Open Call is open to legal entities established and based in one of the EU Member States or a Horizon Europe Associated Country, as defined in the Horizon Europe rules for participation (Section 2.2.3).

The Open Call is not limited to organisations based in Finland or Greece, and there is no requirement to be located in countries that are part of the PRIMARY consortium.

Applicants are therefore encouraged to verify their eligibility under the Horizon Europe framework and ensure alignment with the Open Call requirements.

**28. We would like to kindly ask whether the call scope is strictly focused on agricultural residues in rural contexts, or if urban leaf biomass and municipal green waste streams can also be considered eligible, provided that they are integrated into a circular bioeconomy value chain. In case urban biomass is not fully aligned, we would be happy to reposition the project towards agricultural residues.**

According to the Applicants' Guide, proposals should use at least one ( $\geq 1$ ) underutilised agricultural residue, including examples such as olive tree prunings, greenhouse by-products, grass/silage, etc.

The Guide also allows for the use of similar feedstocks, provided that their characteristics, availability, and valorisation pathways are comparable and aligned with the objectives of the Open Call.

Applicants are therefore encouraged to carefully assess and justify how their proposed feedstock fits within the definition of underutilised agricultural residues and how it aligns with the scope and objectives of PRIMARY, particularly in relation to rural bioeconomy value chains.

The final determination of eligibility and scope alignment will be carried out during the eligibility check and evaluation process by independent evaluators.

**29. I have found your open call on the [opencall.fund](https://opencall.fund) website. However, I can't find the templates mentioned (from annex 5 to annex 9). Can you please help me?**

All official templates (Annexes 5–9) are available through the [PRIMARY website](#), as part of the Open Call documentation.

**30. Is it possible for an organisation based in an African country (e.g. an NGO from Cameroon) to apply as a single applicant under this call (e.g. €50,000 funding type)?**

According to the Applicants' Guide, proposals must be submitted strictly by a consortium of 2–3 legal entities.

In addition, participation is open to legal entities established and based in one of the EU Member States or a Horizon Europe Associated Country, as defined in Section 2.2.3 of the Guide.

**Are third-country applicants (e.g. organisations based in African countries) eligible to receive direct funding under consortium applications (e.g. €100,000 and €150,000 funding types)? If so, are there any limitations regarding their role, budget share, or type of activities within the project?**

Eligibility of participating entities is defined based on their establishment in countries eligible under the Horizon Europe framework, as specified in the Applicants' Guide (Section 2.2.3).

Applicants are therefore encouraged to verify whether their organisation is established in an eligible country. The final determination of eligibility will be carried out during the eligibility check.

**In the case of consortium applications, are there any restrictions on budget allocation between EU/associated countries and third countries (e.g. African organisations)**

The Applicants' Guide does not specify particular rules regarding budget allocation between countries. Proposals are expected to comply with the overall funding scheme and eligibility criteria described in the Guide.

**Could you kindly confirm whether organisations based in Türkiye are eligible to participate in this call, and if so, whether they can also take on leading roles such as lead applicant?**

According to the Applicants' Guide, participation is open to legal entities established in EU Member States or Horizon Europe Associated Countries.

Applicants are encouraged to verify their country's status under Horizon Europe. The Guide does not specify restrictions regarding roles within the consortium; therefore, roles such as coordinator/lead applicant should be defined within the consortium, subject to compliance with eligibility criteria.

The final determination of eligibility and consortium composition will be carried out during the eligibility check and evaluation process by independent evaluators.

**31. Can African institutions be included as partners in a consortium?**

According to the Applicants' Guide, participation in the Open Call is open to legal entities established and based in one of the EU Member States or a Horizon Europe Associated Country, as defined in Section 2.2.3.

Applicants are therefore encouraged to verify whether their organisation is established in a country eligible under the Horizon Europe framework.

**If so, are they eligible for funding, or only as unfunded collaborators?**

Eligibility for funding is linked to the eligibility of the participating organisation, as defined in the Applicants' Guide.

Applicants are encouraged to ensure that all consortium members comply with the eligibility criteria. The final determination of eligibility and funding will be carried out during the eligibility check and evaluation process.

**Are there recommended pathways for non-European partners to engage, for example through collaboration with EU-based consortia?**

The Applicants' Guide does not specify particular pathways for the participation of organisations from non-eligible countries. Applicants are therefore encouraged to structure their consortium in line with the eligibility criteria and requirements described in the Guide.

**32. In the Open Call documentation, the list of eligible feedstocks includes grass, greenhouse residues, cotton by-products, and olive prunings, along with “similar alternatives” referring to other underutilised agricultural residues.**

**I would like to ask whether woody biomass derived from agricultural hedgerows (non-fruit, non-food species) can be considered an eligible feedstock under the category of “similar alternatives,” provided that such hedgerows are located within agricultural landscapes and generate underutilised woody residues.**

According to the Applicants’ Guide, proposals should use at least one underutilised agricultural or agro-industrial residue, including PRIMARY feedstocks or similar ones, provided that their characteristics, availability, and valorisation pathways are comparable and aligned with the objectives of the Open Call.

Applicants are therefore encouraged to clearly justify how their proposed feedstock qualifies as an underutilised agricultural residue and how it aligns with the scope and objectives of PRIMARY.

**The call specifies that projects must be implemented in rural European regions that are not already involved in the PRIMARY project. Given this requirement, I would like clarification on whether agricultural residues produced within urban or peri-urban agricultural areas are admissible, provided that the project activities—including technology validation and business model development—take place in rural regions as defined by the call.**

The Applicants’ Guide specifies that project activities should be implemented in rural European regions (NUTS 3 level) that are not already involved in the PRIMARY project.

However, the Guide does not provide a strict definition regarding the origin of the biomass (e.g. rural vs urban or peri-urban areas). Applicants are therefore encouraged to demonstrate how their proposed activities are anchored in eligible rural regions and how the overall value chain contributes to the objectives of the Open Call.

As part of the proposal, applicants should clearly describe the geographical scope of implementation and justify its relevance in relation to rural bioeconomy development and the validation of PRIMARY solutions.

**33. Should one of the partners be a farmer or a cooperative? (or is it possible for a technical partner to upcycle farmer’s waste without a farmer partner)?**

According to the Applicants’ Guide, proposals must be submitted by a consortium of 2–3 legal entities, including:

at least one technical partner, and at least one public or private sector partner acting as an end user (e.g. producer, cooperative, SME, research organisation, or civil society organisation).

The Guide does not require a specific type of organisation (such as a farmer or cooperative), but applicants are expected to ensure that the consortium includes an appropriate end-user partner and clearly justifies the role of each partner.

**34. I understand the project involves materials produced using different technologies. However, I would like to better understand whether the project also aims to include application development or technical proof-of-concept activities based on these materials, or whether the focus is primarily on material/process development itself.**

**It would be very helpful to know how application-oriented work is positioned within the project, and whether such activities are considered an intended part of the overall objectives.**

According to the Applicants' Guide, the PRIMARY Open Call supports projects that validate, adapt, and demonstrate integrated value-chain solutions based on the valorisation of underutilised agricultural residues in rural European regions.

The scope of the Open Call includes the implementation, testing, and validation of solutions under real-life conditions, covering aspects such as technical feasibility, economic viability, and replicability. Proposals are therefore expected to demonstrate practical application of the selected processes and business models within a regional context.

Applicants are encouraged to carefully review the Open Call documentation to assess alignment with the objectives, scope, and requirements before preparing a submission.

Please note that the final eligibility assessment will be carried out by external evaluators during the evaluation process.

**35. Can pomace (residues from fruit and vegetable processing) be considered an eligible type of agricultural residue under the PRIMARY Open Call?**

According to the Applicants' Guide, each proposal must address at least one feedstock, selected either from the PRIMARY feedstock streams or from similar agricultural residues, provided that their characteristics, availability, and valorisation pathways are comparable and aligned with the project's objectives on sustainable biomass utilisation.

**Would a project focused on the production of organic fertilizer and biogas (with energy used for internal consumption) be considered within the thematic scope of the call?**

In terms of scope, proposals are expected to incorporate at least one of the defined PRIMARY processing concepts (e.g. biorefinery, submerged & solid-state

fermentation, fibre-forming, pelletizing, or pyrolysis/gasification) that convert underutilised agricultural residues into high-value food, feed, bio-based materials, and bioenergy value chains in rural conditions.

**36. As stated, proposals should address at least one technology and one waste stream of PRIMARY. However, it is not entirely clear whether the selected technology is expected to be: provided by the applicant consortium, or transferred/provided by PRIMARY partners.**

**If it must be provided by the applicant consortium, I do not understand this sentence in the open call "pilot and adapt at least one ( $\geq 1$ ) of the six (6) PRIMARY processing concepts, namely biorefinery process, submerged fermentation, solid-state fermentation, fibre-forming technology, pelletizing or pyrolysis/gasification of agricultural residues, in European regions where similar pilot or demonstration infrastructure is limited or absent".**

The Open Call is designed as a mechanism to test, promote, validate, and replicate PRIMARY business model blueprints and processing concepts in additional European regions beyond those already involved in the project . Proposals are therefore expected to clearly describe how the selected PRIMARY processing concept will be piloted and adapted in the proposed regional context, and how replicability and scalability will be demonstrated.

Applicants are required to incorporate at least one of the defined processing concepts, as described in Appendix 1 of the Applicants' Guide , and to structure their proposal in alignment with the corresponding business model blueprint.

It is the responsibility of the applicant consortium to ensure that it has the necessary technical capacity, infrastructure, and rights to implement and validate the selected processing concept, as required under the eligibility and implementation provisions outlined in Section 2.2.1.

**37. Could you please confirm whether a private non-profit RTO is eligible to participate as a partner in a consortium?**

According to the Applicants' Guide, the PRIMARY Open Call is open to legal entities established in countries eligible for Horizon Europe funding, including organisations such as universities, research organisations, SMEs, start-ups, cooperatives, NGOs, and other relevant actors involved in the sustainable valorisation of agricultural residues.

Additionally, the Open Call requires that proposals are submitted by consortia of 2–3 legal entities, including at least one technical partner and at least one private or public sector partner acting as an end user.

In this context, organisations whose role and activities align with the requirements and descriptions outlined in the Applicants' Guide may be considered eligible to participate.

Please note that the final assessment of the suitability of the consortium composition and partners will be performed by the external evaluators during the evaluation process.

**38. If the involvement of stakeholders via LOIs (municipality, farmers, industry partners) is sufficient.**

With regard to Letters of Support or Letters of Intent from municipalities, farmers, or industry partners, there is no formal requirement to submit such letters. However, parties may refer to them within the proposal to demonstrate commitment of the local value chain and implementation capacity. Please note that Letters of Support or Intent do not count towards the minimum eligibility criteria for consortium composition. Only the formally established consortium partners, as declared in the Consortium Declaration, are considered for eligibility purposes in accordance with Section 2.2.1. The final determination of the suitability of all consortium members will be made by the external evaluators during the evaluation process, as described in Section 2.5 of the Applicants' Guide.

**Where can we find more detailed documentation or technical descriptions of the PRIMARY processing concepts? Are there guidelines, datasets, or case studies available for applicants?**

Detailed descriptions of the PRIMARY processing concepts, including grass biorefinery, fibre or foam-forming technologies, etc., are provided in Appendix 1 of the Applicants' Guide. The Business Model Template and Circular Business Model Canvas guidance further clarify how applicants are expected to structure and assess their value chain and scalability approach.

**39. We wonder if we could submit a proposal with 3 partners all of them from the same country (Spain).**

According to Section 2.2.1 of the Applicants' Guide, proposals must be submitted by consortia of 2–3 eligible legal entities that meet the defined composition requirements. The Guide does not impose a requirement that consortium partners must originate from different countries.

However, activities must be implemented in rural European regions that are not already involved in the PRIMARY project. Applicants are therefore encouraged to ensure that the proposed implementation region complies with these geographical eligibility conditions.

**We are the technical partner (capable of testing/applying/validating the technology/process) and there is also one University that would collaborate. We wonder if the third party (the end-user) can be a large firm or if it has to be an SME.**

According to Section 2.2 of the Applicants' Guide, the Financial Support to Third Parties mechanism is primarily addressed to SMEs and similar entities in line with the objectives of the call. Large enterprises that do not fall within the eligible categories defined in Section 2.2 are not eligible to receive funding as consortium partners. However, entities that are not eligible as funded partners may still be involved in the proposal as external stakeholders, for example through letters of support or advisory roles, provided that they are not counted among the 2–3 formal consortium partners and do not receive funding under the sub-grant.

Applicants are responsible for ensuring that the formal consortium composition complies fully with the eligibility requirements described in the Applicants' Guide.

Please note that the final eligibility assessment will be carried out by independent external experts during the evaluation process.

**What does it mean when you say that the Submerged fermentation is piloted at Espoo (Finland) (VTT facilities). Does it mean that the validation has to be made in Finland (I guess not, but just want to be sure).**

As described in Section 1.3 and Appendix 1 of the Applicants' Guide, the PRIMARY project develops and pilots specific processing concepts within its consortium regions. The reference to piloting at Espoo (Finland) concerns activities undertaken within the PRIMARY consortium.

The Open Call aims to validate, adapt, and demonstrate at least one of the defined processing concepts in additional rural European regions beyond those already involved in the project. Therefore, applicants are expected to propose implementation in eligible regions not already covered by the PRIMARY consortium, in line with the geographical conditions outlined in Section 2.2.1.

**40. Whether a subcontractor already declared in the original project is eligible to participate in this call.**

According to the Applicants' Guide, existing members of the PRIMARY project and their affiliated entities are not eligible to participate in the Open Call. In addition, applicants (including all consortium parties) must not be involved in the implementation of the PRIMARY project and must not have any contractual or collaborative relationship with any PRIMARY consortium partner for the provision of services or activities under PRIMARY, including through pilot or demonstration plants, as this may constitute a conflict of interest.

**Whether the funding amount is fixed per partner, rather than being a percentage of the total budget (with a ceiling of €50,000).**

As described in the Applicants' Guide, the maximum grant is €100,000 for consortia of two (2) partners and €150,000 for consortia of three (3) partners. As you correctly mention, each consortium partner may draft a budget of up to €50,000. The internal distribution of the budget among consortium partners must be clearly described and justified in the proposal and reflected in the official budget template, in accordance

with the submission and budget provisions outlined in the Applicants' Guide. The Open Call does not define a fixed amount per partner beyond these maximum limits; the allocation should be proportionate to the tasks and responsibilities assigned within the consortium.

#### **41. Is Serbia eligible as the location of implementation and for participating entities under this Open Call?**

According to the Applicants' Guide , the Open Call is open to legal entities established in countries eligible for funding under Horizon Europe rules. Applicants are advised to carefully review the definition of eligible countries in Section 2.2.3 to confirm eligibility status.

Please note that activities must be implemented in rural European regions that are not already involved in the PRIMARY project.

#### **Would a project idea of this type, based on corn cob residue valorisation into repellent pellets/tablets, be considered potentially in scope of the PRIMARY Open Call?**

As described in the Applicants' Guide , proposals must incorporate at least one ( $\geq 1$ ) defined PRIMARY processing concept and use at least one ( $\geq 1$ ) underutilised agricultural residue, either from the PRIMARY feedstock streams or a similar residue with comparable characteristics and valorisation pathways aligned with the project's objectives on sustainable biomass utilisation.

Applicants are therefore expected to clearly demonstrate how the selected residue and proposed application align with the defined processing concepts and contribute to the validation and adaptation of PRIMARY business model blueprints under rural conditions.

The final eligibility assessment will be carried out by independent external experts during the evaluation process.

#### **Would it be acceptable if the end-user partner is involved primarily in the final production/formulation stage (pelletizing and validation), while the main technological development is carried out by the research institute?**

The internal division of tasks within the consortium, including whether the research institute leads the technological development and the end-user partner focuses on final-stage formulation and validation, should be clearly described and justified in the proposal. What is essential is that the required roles are formally fulfilled and that the end-user partner demonstrates a concrete role in real-life implementation and validation, in accordance with the Applicants' Guide.

#### **More generally, would this setup satisfy the requirement for a technical partner and an end-user partner within the consortium?**

Whether a specific setup satisfies the eligibility requirements depends on compliance with the consortium size (2–3 partners), role distribution, country eligibility, and

absence of conflict of interest conditions, as described in Section 2.2.1. The final determination of eligibility and alignment with the scope of the Open Call will be made during the eligibility check and evaluation process by independent external experts.

**42. Can non-European partners receive funding or participate in a non-funded capacity?**

The Open Call does not foresee participation in a non-funded capacity. Therefore, only eligible entities forming an eligible consortium may participate and receive funding within the framework of this call.

**43. I have an enquiry about subcontracting as stated in the applicant guidance:**

**“Coordination tasks cannot be subcontracted. Applicants should ensure that there are sufficient details for the action tasks, the estimated budget, and the procedure that will be followed to ensure best value-for-money.”**

**If a cooperative was to apply as partner in a consortium but due to leanness of resource choose to subcontract project management on their behalf will that be not allowed? Does Project management on behalf of one of the partners falls into “coordination”? what about project comms and dissemination?**

Project management responsibilities that relate to the formal coordination and governance of the consortium are considered part of the core partner obligations and therefore may not be subcontracted.

On the other hand, dissemination and communication activities may be subcontracted, provided that they do not replace the formal responsibilities of consortium partners and that the proposal clearly describes the scope of the subcontracted tasks, the related budget, and the procedure ensuring best value for money, as required in the Applicants' Guide .

Please note that compliance with subcontracting rules and overall eligibility requirements will be assessed during the eligibility check and evaluation process, as described in the Applicants' Guide.

**44. We would like to confirm whether such a project would be considered eligible under the Open Call, in particular regarding:**

**i) The use of a feedstock not explicitly listed (Opuntia), but sharing similar characteristics with underutilised agricultural residues (availability, low current valorisation, local processing potential).**

**ii) The adaptation of PRIMARY process concepts through a low-tech fractionation approach, rather than direct implementation of one of the six specific technologies.**

As described in the Applicants' Guide, each proposal must address at least one ( $\geq 1$ ) underutilised agricultural residue, either one of the PRIMARY feedstock streams or a similar agricultural residue, provided that its characteristics, availability, and valorisation pathways are comparable and aligned with the project's objectives on sustainable biomass utilisation. Therefore, the use of a feedstock not explicitly listed may be considered, provided that applicants clearly justify its status as an underutilised agricultural residue and demonstrate its comparability with the PRIMARY feedstocks in terms of technical characteristics, availability, and value-chain logic. This justification should be explicitly presented in the proposal.

In addition, the Applicants' Guide specify that proposals must incorporate at least one ( $\geq 1$ ) of the defined PRIMARY processing concepts, such as biorefinery, submerged fermentation, solid-state fermentation, fibre-forming technology, pelletizing, or pyrolysis/gasification of agricultural residues. Applicants are expected to clearly demonstrate how their proposed approach aligns conceptually and operationally with one of these defined processing concepts and how it contributes to the validation, adaptation, and improvement of a corresponding PRIMARY business model blueprint under rural conditions.

Please note that the final determination of eligibility and alignment with the scope of the Open Call will be made during the eligibility check and evaluation process by independent external experts.

**45. Section 2.2.3 outlines the countries whose legal entities are eligible to participate in the Open Call. However, we would like to understand whether the implementation of sub-project activities — including pilot demonstrations, feedstock valorisation trials, and business model validation — is restricted to EU Member States only, or whether it may extend to Horizon Europe Associated Countries, in accordance with the Horizon Europe rules for participation.**

**In this regard, we would appreciate your guidance on whether such activities could be carried out in countries such as Ukraine (excluding non-government-controlled territories), Moldova, and Armenia, given that these countries have active association agreements with Horizon Europe that have started to produce legal effects.**

According to the Applicants' Guide, participation in the Open Call is open to legal entities "established and based in one of the EU Member States or an HE Associated country as defined in HE rules for participation (Section 2.2.3)."

Regarding the implementation of sub-project activities, the Applicants' Guide specifies that projects are expected to be carried out in rural European regions (NUTS 3 level) that are not already involved in the PRIMARY project.

The Guide does not explicitly distinguish between EU Member States and Horizon Europe Associated Countries in terms of implementation locations. Applicants are therefore encouraged to ensure alignment with both the geographical scope of the Open Call (European regions) and the Horizon Europe eligibility framework, and to clearly justify the proposed implementation context in their application.

The final determination of eligibility and compliance with geographical requirements will be carried out during the eligibility check and evaluation process by independent evaluators.

**46. Is there a minimum TRL level explicitly required for applications? Is achieving TRL 5–6 by the end of the project mandatory, or is it recommended?**

The Applicants' Guide does not define a specific minimum or mandatory TRL for participation in the Open Call. Instead, supported projects are expected to demonstrate technical feasibility, economic viability, and replicability of integrated value-chain solutions under real rural conditions. The focus of the Open Call is therefore on the validation, adaptation, and replication of at least one PRIMARY processing concept and related business model blueprint in a regional context, rather than on achieving a predefined TRL target.

**How is TRL considered in the evaluation of technical feasibility for applications?**

Regarding evaluation, proposals are assessed on the basis of predefined evaluation criteria, as described in Section 2.5.2 of the Applicants' Guide. While TRL as such is not explicitly required, the level of technological maturity and the credibility of the validation plan may be considered within the assessment of technical feasibility and implementation capacity.

Applicants are therefore encouraged to clearly justify the maturity of their proposed solution, the realism of the validation activities, and how the project contributes to demonstrable feasibility and replicability in line with the objectives set out in the Applicants' Guide.

Please note that the overall eligibility requirements will be assessed during the eligibility check and evaluation process by independent external experts.

**47. I have an enquiry about subcontracting as stated in the applicant guidance:**

**“Coordination tasks cannot be subcontracted. Applicants should ensure that there are sufficient details for the action tasks, the estimated budget, and the procedure that will be followed to ensure best value-for-money.”**

**If a cooperative was to apply as partner in a consortium but due to leanness of resource choose to subcontract project management on their behalf will that be not allowed? Does Project management on behalf of one of the partners falls into “coordination”? What about project comms and dissemination?**

Project management responsibilities that relate to the formal coordination and governance of the consortium are considered part of the core partner obligations and therefore may not be subcontracted.

On the other hand, dissemination and communication activities may be subcontracted, provided that they do not replace the formal responsibilities of consortium partners and that the proposal clearly describes the scope of the subcontracted tasks, the related budget, and the procedure ensuring best value for money, as required in the Applicants' Guide .

Please note that compliance with subcontracting rules and overall eligibility requirements will be assessed during the eligibility check and evaluation process, as described in the Applicants' Guide.

**48. I have been looking at this funding call from the PRIMARY project €900K Open Innovation Call | PRIMARY. My question for the partner selection: if we are a UK based organization and looking for partners to put an application together, are we restricted to look for partners only from member countries of PRIMARY (Greece, Finland, Estonia) or partners can be EU based (from all countries).**

According to the Applicants' Guide, the PRIMARY Open Call is open to legal entities established in countries eligible for Horizon Europe funding. The Guide does not restrict consortium formation to the countries of the PRIMARY consortium (e.g. Greece, Finland, Estonia). Consortia may therefore be composed of eligible legal entities established in countries that are eligible under Horizon Europe rules, provided that all consortium members meet the defined eligibility criteria and that the proposed activities are implemented in rural European regions not already involved in the PRIMARY project .

Applicants are encouraged to carefully review the definition of eligible countries and the geographical implementation conditions to ensure full compliance before preparing a proposal.

Please note that the final eligibility assessment will be carried out by independent evaluators during the evaluation process.

**49. Under the Guidelines for applicants, it is explicitly mentioned that a consortia of at least one technical partner ( process operator, partner testing/applying/validating the technology/process) and at least one partner from the public (e.g. public body, university) or the private sector (e.g. primary producers, Cooperatives, start-ups, SMEs, NGOs) should be created. Would it be possible to confirm with you whether a technology center, a university and a big company (+250 employees) are eligible to form a consortia?**

The Financial Support to Third Parties mechanism is primarily addressed to SMEs and similar entities in line with the objectives of the call. Large enterprises that do not

fall within the eligible categories defined in Section 2.2 are not eligible to receive funding as consortium partners. However, entities that are not eligible as funded partners may still be involved in the proposal as external stakeholders, for example through letters of support or advisory roles, provided that they are not counted among the 2–3 formal consortium partners and do not receive funding under the sub-grant.

**50. Are companies which cultivate microalgae by carbon capture in bioreactors and later transform them to (a) vitamin rich human feed (b) omega 3 nutrient rich animal feed, (c) waste to biochar product eligible for this call ?**

Proposals must address at least one ( $\geq 1$ ) underutilised agricultural residue (either PRIMARY's or similar) and **incorporate at least one ( $\geq 1$ ) of the defined PRIMARY processing concepts**, namely biorefinery, submerged fermentation, solid-state fermentation, fibre-forming technology, pelletizing, or pyrolysis/gasification.

The Open Call aims to validate, adapt, and replicate PRIMARY processing concepts and business model blueprints under real rural conditions . Applicants are therefore expected to clearly demonstrate how their proposed feedstock qualifies as an underutilised agricultural residue and how the proposed processing pathway aligns with one of the defined PRIMARY processing concepts.

Applicants are encouraged to assess whether their concept fits within the scope and objectives of the Open Call before preparing a submission.

**Important:** Please note that the final eligibility assessment will be carried out by independent external experts during the evaluation process.

**51. In the Annex-4 Applicants Guide stated that proposals should use at least one ( $\geq 1$ ) underutilised agricultural residue either one of the PRIMARY feedstocks or similar ones, including crop residues (cotton stalks, cereal straw), pruning biomass (olive, vineyard), greenhouse by-products (stems/leaves), or grass/silage. However in the Open Call Text(Fiche) it is narrowed. Can we work on vineyard pruning mass? Is Appendix 4 applicable?**

The Applicants' Guide (Annex 4) constitutes the primary reference document for eligibility, scope, and implementation requirements. Applicants should therefore rely on the provisions described in the Applicants' Guide when assessing feedstock eligibility and alignment.

**52. We are a biotechnology company focused on the fermentation of microalgae and seaweed biomass, and we are interested in joining the call together with potential partners. However, we had one point we wanted to clarify:**

**Are you also including waste seaweed (i.e., seaweed washed ashore from the sea and collected by municipalities but not further utilized) biomass within the scope of biomass to be evaluated under the call?**

According to the Applicants' Guide, proposals must use at least one ( $\geq 1$ ) underutilised agricultural residue, either one of the PRIMARY feedstocks or similar ones, including crop residues (e.g. cotton stalks, cereal straw), pruning biomass (e.g. olive, vineyard), greenhouse by-products (stems/leaves), or grass/silage .

Applicants are expected to clearly demonstrate how their proposed feedstock qualifies as an underutilised agricultural residue and aligned with the scope and objectives of the Open Call before preparing their submission.

Please note that the final eligibility assessment will be carried out by independent external experts during the evaluation process.

**53. Do we need to outline the entire project in the application and then break it down into sub-projects?**

No, each application corresponds to one sub-project. As described in the Applicants' Guide, the Open Call will fund 6–9 sub-projects, each submitted by a consortium of 2–3 partners . Therefore, you submit one proposal for one sub-project.

**Is a local council considered a public body?**

The Applicant's Guide explicitly includes public bodies under public sector partners . A local council is considered a public body and may participate in that capacity, subject to meeting the eligibility criteria.

**Is it necessary to have a private sector partner?**

Not necessarily. Section 2.2.1 requires:

At least one technical partner, and

At least one partner from the public or private sector acting as an end user.

**If there were two or three partners, would the funding be a maximum of €50,000 per partner? Does this mean that each partner would be allocated this amount, or that the distribution would depend on each partner's contribution to the sub-project?**

According to the Applicants' Guide, the maximum budget per consortium partner is €50,000. This means that €50,000 is the maximum allowed ceiling per partner, but it is not mandatory that each partner receives the full amount. The declared budget per partner may be lower, depending on the partner's role, responsibilities, and justified costs within the sub-project.

The internal distribution of the budget among partners must be clearly described and justified in the proposal and budget template, in line with the guidance provided in the Applicants' Guide

We encourage you to carefully review the Applicants' Guide to ensure full alignment with the Open Call objectives and consortium requirements .

Please note that final eligibility and compliance will be assessed by independent external experts during the evaluation process.

**54. I have been reading a bit more on the Open Call, and I am wondering if we can be a fit with our technology (gas-fermentation to organic acids) for the Open Call criteria, or if the focus is more on scale-up, economic validation and expansion of the already developed technologies for the Open Call applications?**

According to Section 1.3 of the Applicants' Guide , the PRIMARY Open Call focuses on the validation, adaptation, and replication of predefined PRIMARY processing concepts and related business model blueprints under real rural conditions. The aim is to demonstrate technical feasibility, economic viability, and replicability of integrated value-chain solutions based on underutilised agricultural residues.

Proposals are therefore expected to incorporate at least one ( $\geq 1$ ) of the defined PRIMARY processing concepts, namely biorefinery, submerged fermentation, solid-state fermentation, fibre-forming technology, pelletizing, or pyrolysis/gasification of agricultural residues . Applicants should clearly demonstrate how their proposed approach aligns with one of these concepts and contributes to the validation and replication objectives of the Open Call.

**55. The guide states that activities must be implemented in rural European regions defined at NUTS 3 level, and that both the UK and Turkey are eligible associated countries under Horizon Europe. Could you please confirm whether the UK and Turkey qualify as eligible implementation regions for the purposes of this call?**

Indeed, according to the Applicants' Guide, participation in the Open Call is open to legal entities established and based in one of the EU Member States or in a Horizon Europe Associated Country, as defined under the Horizon Europe rules for participation.

Applicants are responsible for verifying whether the country concerned is formally recognised as a Horizon Europe Associated Country at the time of submission.

Please note that the final eligibility assessment will be carried out by independent external evaluators during the evaluation process.

**56. Are the funds only for projects that are already operational?**

The Open Call supports pilot and demonstration sub-projects that validate, adapt, and replicate PRIMARY processing concepts and business model blueprints under real rural conditions. Projects are expected to demonstrate technical feasibility, economic viability, and replicability. Please also note that proposals shall request funding only for the activities to be implemented after selection, not for work already accomplished.

**Are the Canary Islands eligible?**

According to Section 2.2.3, eligible applicants must be established in an EU Member State or a Horizon Europe Associated Country. Applicants are responsible for verifying that the proposed region complies with these geographical requirements. Please note that the final eligibility assessment will be carried out by independent external experts during the evaluation process.

**Must the technical partner have a university degree?**

The Applicants' Guide defines a technical partner as a process operator or a partner capable of testing, applying, or validating the technology or process. The requirement concerns functional capacity, not academic qualifications. Applicants must clearly demonstrate the technical capability of the partner in the proposal.

**Is financing available for projects not yet established?**

The Open Call provides fixed grants for eligible consortia to implement pilot and demonstration sub-projects aligned with PRIMARY processing concepts. It does not operate as a general investment financing scheme.

**57. Does animal slurry qualify as an eligible feedstock under the "similar residues" provision, given that it is an underutilised agricultural residue widely available in rural European regions and aligned with the project's objectives on sustainable biomass valorisation? Alternatively, would a co-processing approach combining animal slurry with a plant-based agricultural residue (e.g. cereal straw or pruning biomass) be considered eligible?**

Applicants are expected to clearly demonstrate in their proposal how the selected feedstock qualifies as an underutilised agricultural residue and how it aligns with the scope and objectives of the Open Call. It is the responsibility of the applicants to justify the relevance and eligibility of their chosen biomass within the framework described in the Applicants' Guide. Please also note that the final eligibility assessment will be carried out by independent external experts during the evaluation process.

**Is the PRIMARY sub-grant compatible with national or regional (Spanish / Catalan) public aid schemes received by the same consortium partners, provided that no single cost item is funded twice (no double funding)? Could you confirm the specific cumulation rules that will apply under the Sub-grant Agreement?**

The Applicants' Guide specifies that double funding of the same cost item is not permitted. Applicants must ensure that costs declared under the PRIMARY sub-grant are not funded by other EU or national/regional schemes. In addition, proposals shall request funding only for the part of the work that has not yet been accomplished and will be implemented after selection for funding.

**58. Would biomass originating from hemp be considered an eligible "underutilised agricultural or agro-industrial residue" in the field "Fibre-forming technologies for production of packaging and construction materials"?**

According to Section 2.2.1 of the Applicants' Guide, proposals must use at least one ( $\geq 1$ ) underutilised agricultural residue, either one of the PRIMARY feedstocks or similar ones, including crop residues, pruning biomass, greenhouse by-products, or grass/silage. In addition, proposals must incorporate at least one ( $\geq 1$ ) of the defined PRIMARY processing concepts, including fibre-forming technology, among others processes.

Applicants are expected to clearly demonstrate in their proposal how the selected biomass qualifies as an underutilised agricultural or agro-industrial residue and how it aligns with the scope and objectives of the Open Call, including the relevant processing concept. It is the responsibility of the applicants to justify the eligibility and relevance of the chosen feedstock within the framework described in the Applicants' Guide.

Please note that the final eligibility assessment will be carried out by independent external experts during the evaluation process.

**59. In the Applicants' Guide, I noted the reference to depreciation costs for purchased equipment. In this context, I would be grateful to know whether the rental or leasing of equipment could also be considered eligible in cases where purchasing the equipment would not be the most proportionate or practical option for the implementation of the sub-project.**

**More specifically, could you kindly confirm whether equipment rental may be accepted under any budget category, or whether only the depreciation of purchased equipment is admissible?**

Regarding your question on equipment-related costs, the Applicants' Guide specifies that only depreciation costs for purchased equipment are eligible, in line with the Horizon Europe financial rules.

Applicants are required to carefully structure their budget in accordance with the eligible cost categories described in the Applicants' Guide and to ensure that all declared costs comply with the applicable financial provisions.

It is the responsibility of the applicants to justify the necessity and proportionality of all budgeted costs within the proposal. Final eligibility of declared costs will be assessed during the evaluation and grant preparation phase, in accordance with the rules set out in the Applicants' Guide.

**60. Would pruning residues other than olive prunings, and/or tea processing by-products, be considered eligible under the Open Call if their characteristics and valorisation pathways are sufficiently comparable to the feedstocks listed in the call (e.g. olive tree prunings or greenhouse residues)?**

Applicants may propose other similar agricultural or agro-industrial residues, provided that they clearly demonstrate comparability with the feedstocks listed in the Open Call and alignment with its scope and objectives.

**At proposal stage, what type of justification would you expect in order to demonstrate such comparability? For example:**

- physicochemical characteristics,
- annual availability/volume,
- seasonality,
- current low-value use or disposal route,
- suitability for the selected PRIMARY processing concept.

Proposals are expected to clearly demonstrate how the selected feedstock qualifies as underutilised and suitable for the selected PRIMARY processing concept. It is the responsibility of applicants to provide sufficient technical and contextual justification within the proposal.

**If such residues are considered eligible, would it be acceptable to position them in Table 1 of the Proposal Template under “other similar agricultural or agro-industrial residue”, while selecting the most appropriate PRIMARY processing concept based on their properties?**

If applicants propose a feedstock not explicitly listed, it may be positioned as “other similar agricultural or agro-industrial residue,” provided that the proposal clearly justifies its eligibility and links it to at least one of the defined PRIMARY processing concepts.

**In addition, would the use of existing regional operational experience or infrastructure be acceptable, provided that the proposal requests funding only for the new validation, adaptation, and pilot activities to be carried out under the Open Call?**

As indicated in the Proposal Template (Annex 5), applicants are requested to present their team members and provide information on their education, technical and scientific experience, skills, track record, and relevant infrastructure such as

laboratories and equipment. They must explain the technical and non-technical capacities that qualify the team to develop and implement the chosen solution(s).

Therefore, existing regional operational experience and infrastructure may be described in the proposal as part of demonstrating the consortium's capacity to implement the sub-project. However, in line with the Applicants' Guide, proposals shall request funding only for the activities that will be carried out after selection and must not include costs already incurred.

**61. The guidelines indicate that consortia should consist of 2–3 partners, including at least one technical partner and one public or private partner acting as end-user. In this context, we would like to clarify:**

**- Can non-funded entities such as municipalities or cooperatives be formally included as associated or supporting stakeholders without being counted among the 2–3 consortium partners?**

**- If yes, should such entities be listed in the Proposal Template (e.g. under consortium description), or should they only be referenced as stakeholders and supported through letters of support?**

**- Can the technical partner (e.g. a process operator) also fulfil the role of the end-user responsible for real-life implementation and validation of the solution?**

There is no provision for “associated” consortium partners outside the 2–3 formally established legal entities. Only the declared consortium members are considered for eligibility purposes. Stakeholders such as municipalities or cooperatives may be referenced in the proposal to demonstrate value chain commitment or implementation capacity. However, letters of support do not count towards the minimum consortium composition requirement. Only formally established consortium partners, as declared in the Consortium Declaration, are considered for eligibility purposes.

The Applicants' Guide requires that the consortium includes at least one technical partner and at least one partner acting as end user.

Applicants must clearly justify the role of each partner and demonstrate that all required functional roles are fulfilled within the consortium structure.

The suggested consortium composed of may be eligible, provided that:

- It consists of 2–3 distinct legal entities;
- At least one partner fulfils the technical role;
- At least one partner fulfils the end-user role;
- All partners are established in eligible countries .

Applicants remain responsible for ensuring that their proposed structure complies with the eligibility criteria set out in the Applicants' Guide. Please note that the final eligibility assessment will be carried out by independent external experts during the evaluation process.

**62. Does the technical partner need to provide its own core technology, aligned with one of the PRIMARY processing concepts as described in the guidelines, meaning that the key process technology must already be available within the applicant consortium and be brought directly by the technical partner? Or may the technical partner primarily act as the engineering, implementation, and validation actor, being responsible for implementing, adapting, testing, and validating a technology aligned with the PRIMARY processing concepts, even if that technology is not proprietary to the technical partner and is instead made available by PRIMARY or by another external provider?**

According to the Applicants' Guide, the key requirement is that the consortium clearly demonstrates its capacity to implement, adapt, and validate at least one of the defined PRIMARY processing concepts under real rural conditions. Applicants are responsible for clearly explaining in their proposal: (i) How the selected processing concept is incorporated,

(ii) Which partner is responsible for implementation and validation, and (iii) How the consortium ensures technical feasibility, adaptability, and replicability. Overall, "The selected sub-projects will generate practical evidence on technical performance, operational feasibility, and adaptability to local conditions, supporting wider replication across rural European regions".

Regarding financial aspects, all costs must comply with the eligible cost categories and financial rules described in the Applicants' Guide. If access to or use of external technology, services, or expertise is required, applicants must clearly justify such costs and allocate them under the appropriate eligible cost category (e.g. Equipment) in line with the financial provisions. Double funding of the same cost item is not permitted.

Applicants remain responsible for ensuring that the proposed budget structure is compliant and proportionate to the planned activities.

Please note that the final eligibility and budget compliance assessment will be carried out by independent external experts during the evaluation process.

**63. It would be very helpful for us to confirm the approximate TRL that the projects funded through this open call are expected to reach upon completion.**

The Open Call documentation does not define a specific minimum or target TRL. Instead, as described in the Applicants' Guide, supported sub-projects are expected

to demonstrate technical feasibility, economic viability, and replicability of integrated value-chain solutions under real rural conditions.

Proposals must validate, adapt, and replicate at least one of the defined PRIMARY processing concepts through pilot or demonstration activities in real operational environments. Applicants are therefore responsible for positioning their project maturity in a way that clearly aligns with these expectations and for demonstrating how the proposed activities will achieve validation under real rural conditions.

**64. Are partners expected to travel to PRIMARY in-person Consortium meetings (general assemblies, final event, etc)? If so: can you please inform about how many of these travels are foreseen? should all partners travel or just the “sub-project coordinator”?**

According to the Applicants' Guide and the Open Call documentation, selected sub-projects will operate under a Sub-grant Agreement and will be expected to contribute to monitoring, reporting, and knowledge-sharing activities as defined in the call framework.

The documentation does not specify participation of consortium partners in in-person PRIMARY Consortium meetings. Any potential participation requirements, including representation at events or final dissemination activities, would be communicated to selected sub-projects following the evaluation process and reflected in the Sub-grant Agreement.

Applicants are responsible for planning and justifying any necessary travel costs within their proposed budget, in line with the eligible cost categories described in the Applicants' Guide.

**65. I would like to clarify whether projects converting agri-food biomass into biofertilizers, biocontrol, or non-agricultural material would be eligible under the call?**

**In addition, I would appreciate some clarification regarding the requirement to “validate, adapt or improve one of the four PRIMARY business model blueprints.” Could you please indicate where these blueprints are described, or how applicants are expected to align with them? At present, I have only been able to locate the templates provided in the application**

According to the Applicants' Guide, proposals must use at least one ( $\geq 1$ ) underutilised agricultural residue and incorporate at least one ( $\geq 1$ ) of the defined PRIMARY processing concepts, namely biorefinery, submerged fermentation, solid-state fermentation, fibre-forming technology, pelletizing, or pyrolysis/gasification . Applicants are expected to clearly demonstrate how the selected biomass and the proposed processing pathway align with the scope and objectives of the Open Call and how they will be validated under real rural conditions .

It is the responsibility of the applicants to assess whether the intended outputs, such as biofertilizers, biocontrol products, or other material applications, fall within the valorisation pathways supported under the defined processing concepts and objectives described in the Applicants' Guide .

Regarding the requirement to validate, adapt, or improve PRIMARY business model blueprints, the Applicants' Guide explains that the Open Call aims to test, promote, and replicate PRIMARY solutions and business model approaches in new regional contexts . Applicants are therefore expected to describe in their proposal how their sub-project contributes to the validation, adaptation, or replication of these models in their target rural region. The relevant expectations are outlined in the Applicants' Guide (Appendix 1) and reflected in the Proposal Template.

Applicants are encouraged to carefully review the Applicants' Guide and Proposal Template to ensure alignment with both the technological and business model requirements before preparing their submission.

Please note that the final eligibility and scope assessment will be carried out by independent external experts during the evaluation process.

**66. I am writing to ask for a clarification regarding the types of feedstocks considered eligible under the PRIMARY Open Call. In particular, we would like to better understand what is meant by “agro-industrial by-products” or similar agricultural residues within the scope of the call. We are currently considering the possible use of okara, a by-product generated by the plant-based beverage industry. At present, this material is often discarded or used for animal feed, but we believe it could have potential for further valorization through fermentation processes. Could you please clarify whether okara may be regarded as an eligible feedstock under the Open Call, provided that the proposal is in line with the objectives of PRIMARY and with one of the processing concepts included in the call?**

According to Section 2.2.1 of the Applicants' Guide, proposals must use at least one ( $\geq 1$ ) underutilised agricultural residue, either one of the PRIMARY feedstocks or similar ones, including crop residues, pruning biomass, greenhouse by-products, or grass/silage . The examples provided are indicative and not limited.

In addition, as stated in the Appendix 1 of the Applicants' Guide under “Feedstock identification”, applicants must clearly identify the specific underutilised agricultural or agro-industrial residue available in their region and specify:

The biomass origin,

Estimated annual volume (tons),

Seasonality,

Current treatment pathway (e.g. burned, landfilled, low-value compost),

and justify how it qualifies as a biogenic waste stream or low-value residue .

Applicants are responsible for clearly demonstrating in their proposal how the selected feedstock meets these criteria and how it aligns with the scope and objectives of the Open Call, including incorporation of at least one of the defined PRIMARY processing concepts .

Please note that the final eligibility assessment will be carried out by independent external experts during the evaluation process.

**67. I have a question relating the indirect cost, we can put the 25% of the cost, but are up to 150.000 the whole project? or  $150.000 * 0,25 + 150.000$ ?**

The 25% flat-rate for indirect costs is calculated on the eligible direct costs, in line with the Horizon Europe financial rules applied to the Open Call. However, the total requested grant, including both direct and indirect costs, must not exceed the maximum ceiling defined for the consortium size, i.e. €100,000 or €150,000 respectively .

Applicants are responsible for structuring their budget accordingly and ensuring compliance with the funding limits and financial provisions set out in the Applicants' Guide.

**68. Feedstock: Green House residues, can include fruits/vegetables loss as those not meeting appearance/quality standards ?**

According to Section 2.2.1 of the Applicants' Guide, proposals must use at least one ( $\geq 1$ ) underutilised agricultural residue, either one of the PRIMARY feedstocks or similar ones, including greenhouse by-products . Applicants are expected to clearly demonstrate how the selected biomass qualifies as an underutilised agricultural or agro-industrial residue and how it aligns with the scope and objectives of the Open Call . It is the responsibility of the applicants to justify the relevance and eligibility of the chosen feedstock in their proposal. Please note that the final eligibility assessment will be carried out by independent external evaluators during the evaluation process.

**Region: As we are Spanish (from the Basque Country) must we focus in one region in Spain, our region or another one, eg: Andalucía?**

The Applicants' Guide specifies that activities must be implemented in eligible rural European regions defined at NUTS 3 level . The Guide does not restrict applicants to their own region of establishment; however, applicants must ensure that the selected implementation region complies with the geographical and eligibility criteria described in the Guide . It is the responsibility of the applicants to verify and justify the suitability of the chosen region.

**69. Are fruit and food processing residues (e.g. citrus, apples, potato waste, artichoke residues) acceptable as feedstocks, given they are not explicitly listed but appear comparable to the targeted agricultural residues?**

Section 2.2.1 of the Applicants' Guide specifies that proposals must use at least one ( $\geq 1$ ) underutilised agricultural residue, either one of the PRIMARY feedstocks or similar ones, including crop residues, pruning biomass, greenhouse by-products, or grass/silage. The examples provided are indicative and not limited. Applicants must clearly justify how the selected biomass qualifies as an underutilised agricultural or agro-industrial residue, including its origin, availability, current low-value use or disposal route, and suitability for the selected processing concept, as described in the Guide and Proposal Template. It is the responsibility of the applicants to demonstrate comparability and alignment with the scope of the Open Call.

**70. Could you clarify what is meant by “foam-forming technology” within the context of this call? Is it expected to follow established industrial processes from fibre-based material production, or can simplified/adapted pilot-scale versions be used?**

According to the Annex 4: Applicants' Guide (Appendix 1):

"This technology (foam forming) converts fibre fractions from agricultural feedstocks into bio-based packaging and construction materials. The process involves preparing the fibres (milling/screening) and blending them with water and surfactants to create a slurry. This mixture is mechanically agitated to generate a stable, uniform foam. The foam is poured into moulds or spread onto forming vessels. Water is removed via drainage or vacuum, and the material is dried to solidify the fibrous network. The result is a lightweight, robust material (mats or sheets) that can be finished to precise dimensions, suitable for packaging or insulation applications."

It is the responsibility of the applicants to justify the chosen technical approach, whether pilot-scale or adapted, provided that it aligns with the defined processing concept and the objectives of the Open Call.

**What level of technical capacity is expected from the “technical partner” implementing this process? For example, would a partner with experience in fibre processing, pulp/material prototyping, or laboratory-scale equipment be considered sufficient?**

The Applicants' Guide specifies that the consortium must include at least one technical partner capable of testing, applying, or validating the proposed technology or process. Applicants must clearly demonstrate the technical and non-technical capacities of the consortium members, including relevant infrastructure, equipment, and experience, as described in the Proposal Template.

**What level of demonstration is required for foam-forming processes within the project (e.g., laboratory validation, pilot-scale prototype, or semi-industrial testing)?**

The Open Call supports pilot and demonstration sub-projects that validate technical feasibility, adaptability, and replicability under real rural conditions . Applicants must clearly describe the level of validation and demonstration they intend to achieve and justify how it meets the expectations set out in the Applicants' Guide.

**Are there any specific technical references, case studies, or example implementations (within or outside the PRIMARY project) that applicants could use to better understand the expected process configuration?**

The relevant processing concepts and expectations are described in the Applicants' Guide (Appendix 1) and reflected in the Proposal Template, including indicative examples.

**71. We want to start the application process; we have an SME and a public research centre for a potential consortium of 3 partners. But we have not clear if we can apply because we are a private non-profit foundation, the standard legal form of technology centres in Spain, and it is not listed in 2.2.2.**

**The eligibility criteria are unclear. Could you clarify if the types of entities listed in section 2.2.2 restrict also the technical partner? Or could a technical partner be a different type of entity from those mentioned in section 2.2.2?**

According to the Applicants' Guide , proposals must be submitted by consortia of 2–3 eligible legal entities and must include at least one ( $\geq 1$ ) technical partner and at least one ( $\geq 1$ ) partner from the public or private sector acting as an end user responsible for implementing, using, or validating the proposed process and business model under real-life conditions.

The decisive element is that the required roles are clearly fulfilled within the consortium. One partner must assume the technical role, meaning responsibility for testing, applying, or validating the selected processing concept. At least one partner must act as end user, ensuring real-life implementation and validation of the proposed solution.

The specific legal form of the organisation, such as public body, private entity, foundation, SME, or research centre, is assessed in relation to the eligibility criteria outlined in Section 2.2.1 and Section 2.2.2 . What is essential is that each partner's role is clearly defined and aligned with the Open Call requirements.

Please note that the final determination of eligibility will be made by independent external experts during the eligibility check and evaluation process.

**72. Let's assume that we are considering a technology provider that has strong expertise in liquid fermentation processes and owns the relevant**

**technical know-how and equipment. However, their previous applications have been in a different sector, not specifically focused on agricultural residues or biomass valorisation.**

**Would such a partner be considered eligible, provided that they can adapt their existing technology to the proposed application?**

**In other words, is prior experience in the exact application area required, or is it sufficient to demonstrate strong technical capacity and adaptability?**

According to the Applicants' Guide, the consortium must include at least one technical partner capable of implementing, operating, adapting, testing, or validating processes, technologies, tools, or methodologies relevant to the valorisation of underutilised agricultural residues. The requirement concerns the functional and technical capacity of the partner to enable practical testing and validation of the proposed solution under real or pilot-scale conditions, supporting the assessment of technical feasibility, adaptability, and replicability .

The Guide does not prescribe that the technical partner must have prior experience in the exact same application area. However, applicants are expected to clearly demonstrate in their proposal how the partner's expertise, infrastructure, and technical capabilities are suitable for adapting and implementing the proposed processing concept in line with the objectives of the Open Call .

It is therefore the responsibility of the applicants to justify how the selected technical partner fulfils the role requirements and how their expertise aligns with the valorisation of underutilised agricultural residues under one of the defined PRIMARY processing concepts .

Please note that the final eligibility and evaluation of the consortium composition will be carried out by independent external experts during the evaluation process.

**73. How strictly is the definition of “rural region” applied? Would peri-urban areas be acceptable if they are strongly connected to regional biomass value chains?**

According to the Applicants' Guide, activities must be implemented in eligible rural European regions defined at NUTS 3 level . Applicants are responsible for verifying and justifying in their proposal that the selected implementation area complies with the geographical requirements and aligns with the objective of strengthening rural bioeconomy value chains. In general, a rural area is a geographic area that is located outside towns and cities. Typical rural areas have a low population density and small settlements. Agricultural areas and areas with forestry are typically described as rural, as well as other areas lacking substantial development.

**What level of pilot scale or validation is expected (e.g. lab-scale, pilot-scale, or real operational environment)?**

The Open Call supports pilot and demonstration sub-projects that validate, adapt, and replicate PRIMARY processing concepts and business model blueprints under

real rural conditions . Proposals are expected to demonstrate technical feasibility, economic viability, and replicability . Applicants must clearly describe the level of validation and operational context they intend to achieve and justify how this meets the expectations described in the Applicants' Guide.

### **What are the reporting requirements during the project, both in terms of technical progress and financial aspects?**

The Applicants' Guide and the Sub-Grant Agreement framework describe that funded sub-projects will be subject to technical and financial reporting obligations . Beneficiaries are expected to provide periodic progress updates and financial documentation in accordance with the requirements set out in the call documentation and contractual arrangements.

### **Are there any specific rules or expectations regarding how funding should be distributed between consortium partners?**

The maximum grant is €100,000 for consortia of two (2) partners and €150,000 for consortia of three (3) partners . The total maximum eligible budget per partner is €50,000, although the declared costs may be lower . The internal distribution of the budget among partners must be clearly described and justified in the proposal and budget template.

### **74. Feedstock eligibility: based on FAQ #32 ("pruning biomass e.g. olive, vineyard") and the broader category of "underutilised agricultural or agro-industrial residues", we understand grape pomace and vine prunings would be eligible as "similar feedstocks". Could you confirm this interpretation?**

According to Section 2.2.1 of the Applicants' Guide, proposals must use at least one ( $\geq 1$ ) underutilised agricultural residue, either one of the PRIMARY feedstocks or similar ones, including crop residues, pruning biomass (e.g. olive, vineyard), greenhouse by-products, or grass/silage . The examples provided are indicative and not limited. Applicants are expected to clearly demonstrate in their proposal how the selected biomass qualifies as an underutilised agricultural or agro-industrial residue, including origin, estimated annual volume, seasonality, and current treatment pathway, as described in Appendix 1 under "Feedstock identification" . It is the responsibility of the applicants to justify the eligibility and relevance of the chosen feedstock.

**Technology framing: vermicomposting (combined with downstream extraction to produce multiple value streams from one residue stream) is not explicitly listed among PRIMARY processing concepts. Could it be included as either: (a) a form of solid-state fermentation (vermifermentation, where worm gut microbiome and associated microbial communities transform organic matter in solid phase), or (b) a biorefinery process (multi-product valorisation: solid biofertiliser + liquid biostimulant + humic extract from one feedstock stream)?**

The Open Call requires incorporation of at least one ( $\geq 1$ ) of the defined PRIMARY processing concepts, namely biorefinery, submerged fermentation, solid-state fermentation, fibre-forming technology, pelletizing, or pyrolysis/gasification. Applicants must clearly explain how their proposed technological pathway corresponds to one of these defined processing concepts and how it will be validated, adapted, and replicated under real rural conditions. It is the responsibility of the applicants to determine and justify the most appropriate alignment within the framework of the defined concepts.

**Region eligibility: could you confirm that the Ave NUTS 3 region (Northwest Portugal) is not currently involved in PRIMARY's main consortium activities and is therefore eligible for sub-project implementation?**

The European regions already involved in the project are Finland: Ostrobothnia, Häme, Savo; Greece: Karditsa, Heraklion, Lykovrysi/Regional Unit of North Athens. Sub-project implementation must take place beyond these regions.

**75. In view of a possible proposal submission to the PRIMARY open call, my colleagues and I would like to clarify whether the proposal should necessarily include any field sampling activity during the project execution or if the use of data already collected through recent campaigns is sufficient.**

According to the Applicants' Guide, supported sub-projects are expected to validate, adapt, and replicate PRIMARY processing concepts and business model blueprints under real rural conditions. Proposals must demonstrate technical feasibility, economic viability, and replicability within the operational context of the selected rural region.

Existing data may be referenced in the proposal to demonstrate prior work or baseline conditions. At the same time, proposals shall request funding only for activities to be carried out after selection, and applicants must clearly justify how the planned activities meet the objectives of the Open Call.

**76. In the project proposal template, section 2.1, we are asked to give information how the activities will contribute to the validation, adaptation, and replicability of PRIMARY business model blueprints. Please specify where to find these business model blueprints.**

According to the Applicants' Guide, Objective 1:

"Objective 1: Validate, adapt, and further improve the four (4) PRIMARY business model blueprints for the feedstock streams of grass, greenhouse residues, cotton by-products, and olive tree prunings. Each proposal must address at least one ( $\geq 1$ ) feedstock, which may be selected from the PRIMARY feedstock streams or from similar agricultural residues, provided that their characteristics, availability, and valorisation pathways are comparable to the PRIMARY feedstocks and align with the project's objectives on sustainable biomass utilisation. Applicants are expected to

structure their business model by specifically addressing the building blocks included in the PRIMARY Open Call Business Model Template (Appendix 1). The template, based on a circular business model canvas approach, supports Applicants in describing, testing, and refining their proposed value chain, covering the full scope from feedstock sourcing to market uptake. It further guides Applicants in addressing all key elements in a consistent manner and in validating them through practical implementation in the proposed regional context, thereby generating practical evidence on economic viability, operational feasibility, and value-chain governance arrangements."

Therefore, please go through Appendix 1 in the Applicants' Guide to find more details about the requested business models.

**77. As the maximum funding is 150k in this case, is there any cap on budget allocation per partner? On the website, it is mentioned €50,000 maximum per individual partner, but this is nowhere mentioned in the call documents.**

The maximum eligible budget per consortium partner is €50,000, although the declared costs per partner may be lower. The internal distribution of the budget among consortium partners must be clearly described and justified in the proposal and in the budget template. Applicants are responsible for ensuring that both the overall consortium ceiling and the per-partner limit are respected.

**78. Are there specific requirements regarding the distribution of the grant among consortium members? Must the budget be shared equally between the partners, or is there a maximum percentage/cap that a single partner can claim from the total requested funding?**

According to Annex 4 (Applicants' Guide), the maximum grant is €150,000 per sub-project for consortia of three (3) partners and €100,000 for consortia of two (2) partners. In addition, the maximum eligible budget per consortium partner is €50,000, although the declared costs may be lower. The internal distribution of the budget among consortium partners does not need to be equal, but it must be clearly described and justified in the proposal and in the budget template. Applicants are responsible for ensuring compliance with both the total sub-project ceiling and the per-partner limit.

**Recognizing that large enterprises are not the primary target group for financial support, what is the most appropriate mechanism to formally integrate them into our proposal (e.g., as an unfunded Associated Partner, an Advisory Board member, or via a Letter of Support) without jeopardizing the eligibility of the core consortium?**

According to Section 2.2 of the Applicants' Guide, the Financial Support to Third Parties mechanism is primarily addressed to SMEs and similar entities in line with the objectives of the call. Large enterprises that do not fall within the eligible categories defined in Section 2.2 are not eligible to receive funding as consortium

partners. However, entities that are not eligible as funded partners may still be involved in the proposal as external stakeholders, for example through letters of support or advisory roles, provided that they are not counted among the 2–3 formal consortium partners and do not receive funding under the sub-grant.

Applicants are responsible for ensuring that the formal consortium composition complies fully with the eligibility requirements described in the Applicants' Guide.

Please note that the final eligibility assessment will be carried out by independent external experts during the evaluation process.

**79. Does each consortium partner need to receive and manage their allocated budget directly, or can the coordinating company receive the full funding and redistribute it internally to the partners?**

The Consortium Declaration mentions that: "Payments will be done separately to each partner directly from the consortium coordinator ". This means that the consortium coordinator receives the total awarded sub-grant and is responsible for distributing the corresponding amounts to each consortium partner in accordance with the approved budget allocation.

**As the application is limited to 15 pages, which aspects are generally considered the most important to emphasise? Would you recommend focusing more on the R&D/technical innovation dimension, the business and market potential, or maintaining a balanced approach between both?**

Applicants are expected to address technical feasibility, business model robustness, economic viability, and replicability in a coherent and consistent manner within the 15-page limit. It is the responsibility of the applicants to structure their proposal in line with the evaluation criteria and the instructions provided in Annex 5 (Proposal Template). For equal treatment of all applicants, the Open Call team does not provide preliminary concept assessments or strategic advice on proposal positioning. The final eligibility and evaluation will be carried out by independent external experts during the evaluation process.

**80. The call document states that "All Applicants must have a valid VAT number" and that a "Civil society organisation: any non-governmental and non-profit, voluntary citizens' group which is organised on a local, national or international level such as foundations and non-profits" is eligible. We are indeed a registered non-profits foundation, but without a VAT number (we don't issue invoices), we just have a Tax Identification Number. Are we eligible? I underline that we've already participated in several EU projects.**

Section 2.2.1 of the Applicants' Guide states that applicants must be legally established entities in an eligible country and must provide a valid VAT number. Where a VAT number is not mandatory under national legislation, a registration

number from the respective national authority (National business registry, Commercial court or similar) is accepted as proof of legal establishment.

Applicants are responsible for ensuring that they can provide appropriate official documentation demonstrating their legal status in line with the requirements described in the Guide. The final eligibility assessment will verify compliance with these provisions.

**81. Regarding the implementation of the PRIMARY processing concepts, could you please clarify whether selected consortia will be provided with any technology package, pilot equipment, process protocols, licences, operational know-how developed by the PRIMARY project to implement the selected process solution? Alternatively, are applicants expected to independently provide or secure all the required processing facilities, equipment, licences, technical know-how and operational capacity through their own consortium and/or authorised third-party technology providers?**

According to the Applicants' Guide and Appendix 1, the document provides a structured description of the PRIMARY processing concepts and outlines indicative process steps, value chain elements and business model building blocks. Appendix 1 serves as a guidance framework describing the technological logic and value chain configuration of the defined processing concepts. It does not constitute a detailed technology package, equipment manual, licence agreement or operational protocol to be directly transferred to applicants.

Applicants are expected to use the descriptions in Appendix 1 to align and justify their proposed approach within the defined processing concept, and to demonstrate that their consortium has the necessary technical capacity and infrastructure to implement and validate the selected concept under real rural conditions.

**82. We need to use e-signatures instead of handwritten signatures. We should merge the DoHs together and also the SME declarations together, as requested by the portal. Merging 2 e-signed PDF means that, technically, the e-signatures get lost, while the graphical part of the signature (with name and date) is still present. Is it ok for you if we merge the PDFs losing the electronic part of the signature but keeping the visible one?**

The Open Call documentation does not prescribe a specific technical format for electronic signatures, but it requires that the documents are properly signed and valid at the time of submission. Applicants are responsible for ensuring that the signature remains legally valid and clearly attributable to the authorised legal representative after merging the files.

If merging the PDFs results in the loss of the digital validation layer, applicants must ensure that the visible signature, name, date, and legal representative details are clearly included and that the document remains compliant with national and EU legal standards for signature validity.

**83. Is it mandatory for the biochar to be derived specifically from cotton or olive by-products? Would alternative biomass sources, such as hazelnut shells, be eligible and considered favorably in the evaluation for this open call?**

Section 2.2.1 of the Applicants' Guide specifies that proposals must use at least one ( $\geq 1$ ) underutilised agricultural residue, either one of the PRIMARY feedstocks or similar ones, including crop residues, pruning biomass, greenhouse by-products, or grass/silage. The examples provided are indicative and not limited.

Applicants are responsible for clearly demonstrating in their proposal how the selected biomass qualifies as an underutilised agricultural or agro-industrial residue and how it aligns with the scope and objectives of the Open Call, including incorporation of one of the defined PRIMARY processing concepts.

**In your selection process, is there a preference for the third partner to be a private company or a grower cooperative? Which would best align with the project's dissemination and impact goals?**

The Applicants' Guide requires that proposals be submitted by consortia of 2–3 legal entities including at least one technical partner and at least one public or private sector partner acting as end-user. The Guide does not prescribe a preference between private companies or cooperatives; rather, it defines functional roles and responsibilities.

Applicants are responsible for demonstrating how the selected consortium composition supports validation, economic viability, dissemination and replicability in line with the evaluation criteria described in the Applicants' Guide.

For equal treatment of all applicants, the Open Call team does not provide preliminary concept assessments. The final eligibility and evaluation will be carried out by independent external experts during the evaluation process.

**84. Is it strictly mandatory that consortia comprise only 2 or 3 partners, or would a consortium of 4 partners be considered eligible in justified cases such as the one described above? If 4 formal partners are not allowed, would it be acceptable to include one of the organisations as a subcontractor, while still reflecting their contribution to efficiency, validation, and long-term exploitation of the solution?**

According to the Applicants' Guide, proposals must be submitted by consortia of 2-3 independent legal entities. Consortia exceeding 3 formal partners are not considered eligible under the Open Call rules.

If additional organisations are involved, their role must be structured in a way that remains compliant with the consortium composition rules. Subcontracting is allowed under the conditions described in the Applicants' Guide, provided that subcontracted tasks are clearly justified, represent specific and limited activities, and do not

concern core coordination tasks. Applicants must ensure that the technical and operational capacity required to implement the project remains within the formally established consortium.

Please note that only the formally declared consortium partners, as included in the Consortium Declaration, are considered for eligibility purposes. The final eligibility assessment will be carried out by independent external evaluators during the evaluation process.

We encourage you to carefully review the Applicants' Guide to ensure that your consortium structure is fully compliant before submission.

**85. I am writing to you to find out if social farms can participate in the Primary call: call to support the rural bioeconomy and agricultural innovation.**

According to the Applicants' Guide, proposals must be submitted by consortia of 2-3 independent legal entities, including at least one technical partner and at least one public or private sector partner acting as end-user. The Guide provides examples of eligible private-sector actors (e.g., primary producers, cooperatives, start-ups, SMEs, NGOs).

A social farm could participate in a consortium provided that it is a legally established entity in an eligible country, fulfils one of the required consortium roles (as technical partner or end-user), and meets the general eligibility criteria described in the Applicants' Guide.

Applicants are responsible for clearly defining the role and contribution of each partner and demonstrating alignment with the scope and objectives of the Open Call.

Please note that the final eligibility assessment will be carried out by independent external evaluators during the evaluation process.

**86. First of all, if your technology is in TRL 5, would this be possible that the tests are conducted in the lab of the research center or it is required that the lab is placed in the agrifood company facilities?**

According to the Applicants' Guide, selected proposals are expected to validate, adapt and replicate the selected PRIMARY processing concept under real rural conditions, demonstrating technical feasibility, economic viability and replicability. Applicants must clearly describe how and where the validation activities will take place and how these activities ensure real-life or pilot-scale testing in line with the objectives of the Open Call. It is therefore the responsibility of the applicants to justify in the proposal how the chosen testing environment supports the required validation under real operational conditions.

**Is the budget going to be structured in a lump sum approach?**

The Applicants' Guide specifies that the Open Call follows a lump-sum funding approach. The maximum grant is defined per sub-project depending on the number of partners, and payments are linked to the achievement of predefined deliverables as described in the Sub-Grant Agreement. Applicants are encouraged to carefully review the financial provisions described in the Applicants' Guide and related annexes when preparing their proposal.

**87. We are developing a project that involves using biochar for agronomic applications. However, our current consortium consists of three partners, and none of them are biochar producers. Would it be permissible to subcontract the production of biochar?**

According to the Applicants' Guide, proposals must be submitted by consortia of 2–3 legal entities including at least one technical partner capable of implementing, operating, testing, or validating the proposed technology or process under real or pilot-scale conditions. Subcontracting is permitted under the Open Call framework; however, core tasks essential to the implementation and validation of the proposed solution must be clearly justified. The Guide specifies that coordination tasks cannot be subcontracted and that applicants must ensure sufficient detail regarding tasks, estimated budget, and value-for-money procedures. Applicants are responsible for clearly describing in their proposal which activities are carried out by consortium partners and which are subcontracted, and for justifying how the consortium retains the necessary technical capacity to validate and adapt the selected PRIMARY processing concept.

**88. Does the person applying for the project and completing the platform have to be the company's legal representative? I have registered on the platform to apply for a project for my company, but I am not the legal representative.**

According to the Open Call documentation and submission procedures, the proposal may be prepared and submitted on the platform by a designated contact person. However, the official documents required as part of the application (e.g. Declaration of Honour, SME Declaration and Consortium Declaration) must be signed by the legal representative of each participating organisation, as specified in the Applicants' Guide. Therefore, while the person completing the online submission does not necessarily need to be the legal representative, the formal declarations and commitments included in the application must bear the valid signature of the authorised legal representative.

**89. Objective 2 states that the proposal should 'demonstrate the replicability and scalability of PRIMARY processes', and to 'pilot and adapt at least one (≥1) of the six (6) PRIMARY processing concepts', which are described in the Annex 4. It is clear to anyone skilled in the art that there is a number of parameters which may influence the success of PRIMARY processing concepts (e.g. yield, cost-effectiveness etc.). Is there any specific technical**

and technological know-how developed during the course of the Primary project, which is not given in Annex 4 and which should be incorporated in the project proposal (e.g. in process No 2 specific type of microbial strains used for submerged fermentation may work differently on different feedstocks, or in process No 1 favorable grass pre-processing and processing techniques/conditions may result in different protein yield), or our project proposal should solely rely on Annex 4 as well as on general and our-own know-how of the PRIMARY processing concepts? Will there be any specific technical/technological knowledge on the PRIMARY processing concepts shared with the winning proposals at later instances? The specific knowledge may significantly influence e.g. the choice of processing equipment, project budget proposal and other relevant matter important for both project proposal development and project realization.

According to the Applicants' Guide, proposals must pilot and adapt at least one ( $\geq 1$ ) of the six (6) defined PRIMARY processing concepts and demonstrate their validation, replicability and scalability under real rural conditions. The processing concepts are described in the Applicants' Guide and its Appendix 1, which constitute the official technical reference framework for applicants. Applicants are expected to rely on the information provided in the Open Call documentation together with their own technical expertise and background knowledge when designing their proposed implementation. Applicants are responsible for clearly describing in their proposal the technical pathway they intend to follow, including the selected parameters, equipment, processing conditions and justification of feasibility in relation to the chosen feedstock and processing concept. The evaluation will assess the robustness, coherence and feasibility of the proposed approach as presented in the application. Any future support provided to selected sub-projects will be in line with the terms described in the Applicants' Guide and Sub-grant Agreement.

**90. (i) Does a consortium structure with a coordinator/business-model and agronomic validation lead, a farm end-user/living-lab implementation partner, and a targeted EO-context partner fit the expected partner-complementarity logic, provided all entities meet the legal eligibility requirements? (ii) The proposal selects pyrolysis/gasification. Is it acceptable for the project to validate a farm-centred business model where suitable woody residues are processed through a compliant local/near-farm or regional processing route, while the farm and consortium validate feedstock mobilisation, biochar-compost charging/blending, application, monitoring and replication? (iii) We understand the overall cap is linked to consortium size and partner-level limits, and that dissemination should be explicitly budgeted. Is it acceptable for the budget to allocate significant effort to residue audit, field implementation, soil testing, farmer events, EO-context outputs, business-model validation and replication packaging, while keeping equipment purchase at zero and using existing farm/partner infrastructure where possible? (iv) Some partner administrative details, such as VAT/legal address fields, are being finalised by the partners. Is it acceptable that the Annex 5/Annex 6 drafts contain partner names and roles while administrative fields are completed before the final electronic submission? (v) One**

consortium member is also involved in a separate, independently funded regenerative agriculture project. The SOIL-SPONGE proposal will keep budget, branding, media assets, outputs, reporting and activities fully separate. Is this the right way to present separation from other projects without overloading the proposal text? (vi) Given the 15-page Annex 5 limit, would you recommend prioritising quantified residue availability, process route, business model, partner roles, SMART KPIs and budget justification over longer background discussion and multiple sub-section visuals?

(i) According to Section 2.2.2 of the Applicants' Guide, consortia must consist of 2–3 legal entities, including at least one technical partner and at least one public or private partner acting as end-user under real rural conditions. The complementarity of partners, clarity of roles and contribution to validation and replication will be assessed during evaluation. Applicants are responsible for clearly demonstrating how the proposed consortium structure fulfils the required roles and adds value to rural bioeconomy objectives.

(ii) Proposals must pilot and adapt at least one( $\geq 1$ ) of the defined PRIMARY processing concepts, including pyrolysis/gasification, as described in Appendix 1. Applicants must clearly demonstrate how the selected processing route is implemented, validated and replicated under real rural conditions, and how feedstock mobilisation, processing and application are integrated into a coherent value chain. The Guide does not prescribe a specific ownership model for processing infrastructure, but applicants must clearly describe the operational setup and responsibilities within the consortium.

(iii) According to Objective 1 of the Applicants' Guide, proposals must validate, adapt and improve PRIMARY business model blueprints and clearly describe the value chain, governance model and exploitation pathway (see Appendix 1 in Applicants' Guide). The business model does not need to constitute a separate legal entity; however, the proposal must clearly distinguish the PRIMARY sub-project activities, budget and outputs from broader company operations and explain the post-project exploitation strategy.

(iv) Applicants are responsible for ensuring that all administrative fields and required information are complete and accurate at the moment of final electronic submission.

(v) The Applicants' Guide clearly states that double funding of the same cost item is not permitted. Proposals must request funding only for the part of the work that is not yet accomplished and will be carried out once selected. Applicants are responsible for clearly distinguishing the PRIMARY sub-project activities, budget and outputs from any other funded projects.

(vi) The structure provided in Annex 5 must be followed and should not exceed the 15-page limit (excluding cover page and table of contents). Applicants are responsible for ensuring that the proposal clearly demonstrates feedstock eligibility, processing concept alignment, consortium roles, quantified impact, SMART KPIs (where relevant), replicability and budget justification within the page limit. The evaluation will be based on the completeness, clarity and coherence of the information provided.

Please note that the final assessment will be carried out by independent external evaluators during the evaluation process.

**91. Cooperatives are eligible entities. Are there any restrictions regarding their size or revenue? We understand that there are not, and that these restrictions would only apply to private companies, but we would like to confirm this. There are three partners in our consortium. We understand that the distribution of tasks and budget should be as balanced as possible. Is there any restriction requiring that all three entities have the same budget/share within the project? Our project focuses on Line 6-f: Pyrolysis/gasification of cotton and olive tree residues into biochar. We are three partners.**

According to Section 2.2.2 of the Applicants' Guide, consortia must include 2–3 legal entities, including at least one technical partner and at least one public or private partner acting as end-user under real rural conditions. The Guide provides examples of eligible entity types, such as primary producers, cooperatives, start-ups, SMEs and NGOs. The eligibility criteria are based on legal status and compliance with the geographical and independence requirements described in Sections 2.2.1 and 2.2.3. The Guide does not define size or revenue restrictions for cooperatives. Applicants are responsible for ensuring that each entity fulfils the eligibility criteria and required role within the consortium.

The maximum grant is €150,000 for consortia of three(3) partners and €100,000 for consortia of two(2) partners. The Applicants' Guide specifies that the maximum eligible budget per partner is €50,000. The internal distribution of tasks and budget among partners does not need to be equal, but it must be clearly justified, proportionate to the work allocated and aligned with the principles of sound financial management. The evaluation will assess the coherence between tasks and budget allocation.

According to the Applicants' Guide, subcontracting is permitted provided that it is clearly justified, proportionate and compliant with best value-for-money principles. Coordination tasks cannot be subcontracted. The consortium composition must strictly comply with the 2–3 partner rule; therefore, any additional collaborating entity cannot be included as a formal consortium partner if this exceeds the limit. If subcontracting is foreseen (in the case of a large entity), the proposal should clearly describe the scope of subcontracted tasks and their added value. Letters of support are not mandatory but may be referenced in the proposal to demonstrate value chain engagement. However, letters of support do not count towards the minimum consortium composition requirements.

**92. According to the Applicants' Guide, subcontracting is permitted provided that it is clearly justified, proportionate and compliant with best value-for-money principles. Coordination tasks cannot be subcontracted. The consortium composition must strictly comply with the 2–3 partner rule; therefore, any additional collaborating entity cannot be included as a formal consortium partner if this exceeds the limit.**

**If subcontracting is foreseen (in the case of a large entity), the proposal should clearly describe the scope of subcontracted tasks and their added value. Letters of support are not mandatory but may be referenced in the proposal to demonstrate value chain engagement. However, letters of support do not count towards the minimum consortium composition requirements.**

The eligibility and uniqueness rule applies at the level of the legal entity participating in the call. Each participating organisation is assessed as an individual legal entity, based on its legal registration and independence, as defined under applicable national law. Therefore, the restriction concerns each legal entity separately. However, Applicants are responsible for ensuring that linked enterprises comply with the independence and conflict-of-interest requirements described in Section 2.2.1 of the Applicants' Guide. Where entities are legally distinct but belong to the same group, ownership structure and effective control may be considered during the eligibility and conflict-of-interest assessment. Please note: "Existing members of the PRIMARY project and their affiliated entities are not eligible for the PRIMARY Open Call. In addition, Applicants (including all parties of the consortium) must not be involved in the implementation of the PRIMARY project and must not have any contractual or collaborative relationship with any PRIMARY consortium partner for the provision of services or activities under PRIMARY, including through pilot or demonstration plants. Any such relationship constitutes a conflict of interest that may compromise the impartial and objective implementation of the sub-project; therefore, the Applicant is not eligible under this Open Call."

**93. Would an Albanian applicant with a Start-up Passport/startup registration number, but without a VAT number or NUIS/business registry number at this stage, be considered eligible under the call? Does the applicant need to be a formally registered legal entity already at the time of submission, or would registration before the contracting phase be acceptable if the proposal is selected? In the context of this call, how should "active and operational" be understood for an early-stage startup that is not yet commercially active in the market?**

According to Section 2.2.3 of the Applicants' Guide, participation in the Open Call is open to legal entities established and based in one of the EU Member States or in a Horizon Europe Associated Country, as defined under the Horizon Europe rules for participation.

Regarding legal status, Section 2.2.1 of the Applicants' Guide specifies that Applicants must be legally established entities at the time of submission and must be able to provide a valid VAT number or, if VAT is not mandatory under national legislation, a registration number from the respective national authority (National business registry, Commercial court or similar). Applicants are responsible for ensuring that all eligibility documentation is available and valid at the time of submission.

**94. Our consortium includes an end-user based in Romania and a technical partner based in Ukraine (HE-associated country). The main implementation activities (scientific validation, business model development, dissemination and replication) will take place in rural North-East Romania, while the technical pyrolysis processing trials are carried out at partner's existing industrial facility in Ukraine. Could you please kindly confirm: Whether we should declare only the primary implementation region (rural North-East Romania), or if it is possible to indicate more than one region in the application portal; Whether conducting technical processing activities at a partner facility in Ukraine is fully in line with the eligibility requirements of the call.**

According to Section 2.2.3 of the Applicants' Guide, project activities must be implemented in eligible rural European regions at NUTS 3 level, within EU Member States or Horizon Europe Associated Countries. Applicants are responsible for clearly identifying the primary implementation region where validation, adaptation and replicability activities under real rural conditions will take place. It is possible however to mention both regions in the relevant field of the application form on the platform. Regarding technical processing activities in Ukraine, Ukraine is a Horizon Europe Associated Country. Participation of legally established entities in eligible countries is permitted, provided that the consortium composition complies with Sections 2.2.2 and 2.2.3 of the Applicants' Guide and that the core validation and rural impact objectives of the sub-project are fulfilled in an eligible rural European region. Applicants must clearly describe the geographical distribution of activities, justify the rationale for conducting specific technical tasks at partner facilities, and demonstrate how the overall project contributes to rural bioeconomy development and replicability in the declared implementation region. Please note that the final eligibility assessment will be carried out by independent external evaluators during the evaluation process.

**95. I am writing to kindly request some clarifications regarding the application process for the PRIMARY call. Could you please provide guidance on the following three points? Other Goods and Services Category: In accordance with standard Horizon Europe guidelines, are we required to submit three comparative quotes at the proposal stage for this budget category? Phase 1 (Design - November 2026 to February 2027): Is this initial phase strictly reserved for co-design and planning activities with our partners, or is it permissible to include preliminary operational activities as well (i.e. feedstock collection, feedstock characterization, etc)? Evaluation timeline: Could you please let me know when the publication of the evaluation results/ranking list is expected?**

The Applicants' Guide specifies that all costs must comply with the principles of sound financial management, including best value for money and absence of conflict of interest. Applicants must ensure that sufficient justification is provided for all budgeted costs and that the procedure followed for procurement ensures transparency and proportionality. The Open Call documentation does not require the submission of comparative offers at proposal stage. Regarding the first phase, it is intended for planning and co-design of activities. Proposals will be evaluated after the submission deadline (July-August 2026), and applicants will be informed of the outcome following the completion of the evaluation process. The exact timeline for

publication of the evaluation results is communicated through the official Open Call webpage and related communication channels.

**96. We are what the French law calls “Association” which is a civil organization with all the attributes of a normal company (VAT number, profit based but no dividends, ...) except that we are not registered as a company in the court but in a specific National register for Associations. Therefore, we fall into “A legal entity is a registered individual, business or organization that is legally permitted to enter into a contract, own property, sue or be sued and be held accountable for its actions.” (as stated in annex 4 – 2.2.2). But we do not fall into any of the given example of the same paragraph. Are we eligible to be part of a consortium for PRIMARY ?**

According to Section 2.2.1 of the Applicants’ Guide, Applicants must be legally established entities at the time of submission and must provide a valid VAT number. If a VAT number is not mandatory under national legislation, a registration number from the respective national authority (National business registry, Commercial court or similar) is accepted. Applicants are responsible for ensuring that all required legal and registration information is correctly provided in the application forms. Please note that the final eligibility assessment will be carried out by independent external evaluators during the evaluation process.

**97. How strictly is the definition of “rural region” applied? Would peri-urban areas be acceptable if they are strongly connected to regional biomass value chains? What level of pilot scale or validation is expected (e.g. lab-scale, pilot-scale, or real operational environment)? What are the reporting requirements during the project, both in terms of technical progress and financial aspects? Are there any specific rules or expectations regarding how funding should be distributed between consortium partners?**

According to the Applicants’ Guide, activities must be implemented in eligible rural European regions defined at NUTS 3 level . Applicants are responsible for verifying and justifying in their proposal that the selected implementation area complies with the geographical requirements and aligns with the objective of strengthening rural bioeconomy value chains. In general, a rural area is a geographic area that is located outside towns and cities. Typical rural areas have a low population density and small settlements. Agricultural areas and areas with forestry are typically described as rural, as well as other areas lacking substantial development.

The Open Call supports pilot and demonstration sub-projects that validate, adapt, and replicate PRIMARY processing concepts and business model blueprints under real rural conditions . Proposals are expected to demonstrate technical feasibility, economic viability, and replicability. Applicants must clearly describe the level of validation and operational context they intend to achieve and justify how this meets the expectations described in the Applicants’ Guide.

The Applicants' Guide and the Sub-Grant Agreement framework describe that funded sub-projects will be subject to technical and financial reporting obligations. Beneficiaries are expected to provide periodic progress updates and financial documentation in accordance with the requirements set out in the call documentation and contractual arrangements.

The maximum grant is €100,000 for consortia of two (2) partners and €150,000 for consortia of three (3) partners. The total maximum eligible budget per partner is €50,000, although the declared costs may be lower. The internal distribution of the budget among partners must be clearly described and justified in the proposal and budget template.

**98. In the case of a SME limited liability company with a sole managing director (corresponding to a self-employed person with personal VAT) and no employees, how shall we fill in the direct personnel costs, total PMs and PM rate? In case our proposal is funded, is there any flexibility with regards to the project start date? Being our project activities strongly dependent on agricultural timelines, would it be possible to negotiate (in the order of a few months) on the project start date in order to meet the necessary technical time frame?**

According to the Applicants' Guide, direct personnel costs must reflect the actual effort dedicated to the sub-project and must be calculated in a transparent and justified manner. For SMEs without employees, personnel costs should reflect the actual remuneration linked to project implementation. Therefore, if one person (e.g. the managing director) will be working on the sub-project, the corresponding person-months(PMs) should be declared in the budget.

The Open Call does not prescribe a fixed calculation methodology beyond the requirement of sound financial management and proportionality. The PM rate must be realistic, consistent with national legislation and the entity's internal accounting practices, and clearly justified in the budget template.

Regarding the project schedule, and according to the Open Call documentation, the implementation timeline follows the indicative schedule described in the Applicants' Guide. The official project start date will be defined in the Sub-grant Agreement. In practice, all sub-projects are expected to share a common starting date in order to ensure equal treatment of all selected beneficiaries and to facilitate monitoring of implementation.

**99. Regarding the 7% that must be devoted to dissemination, could you confirm whether it refers to each partner's total budget? Or is it the total asked for the consortium? (In our case, it would be 3-partner consortium). Just to be sure, should we allocate 21% of the total budget for this purpose (7% each), or 7% among the 3 partners? On the other hand, we understand that this 7%, either for each partner or in total for the consortium, should be only part of category 5 (Other direct costs), right?**

As clarified in the Applicants' Guide, dissemination activities should comprise a minimum of 7% of each individual partner's budget and, consequently, a minimum of 7% of the total project budget. Therefore, in a 3-partner consortium, each partner must allocate at least 7% of its own budget to dissemination. Yes, it is correct that dissemination activities are reflected within 5. Other direct costs category.

**100. Our idea involves the solid-state fermentation of sugar beet leaves. However, Attachment 1 mentions the fermentation of tomato and cucumber residues. Is our idea also eligible for funding if we use sugar beets instead? Can you provide me with information on the fundings of research institutes? Are only direct personal costs funded, or also indirect personal costs? Are in-kind contributions funded?**

Regarding feedstock eligibility, according to Section 2.2.1 of the Applicants' Guide, proposals must use at least one ( $\geq 1$ ) underutilised agricultural residue, either one of the PRIMARY feedstocks or similar ones, including crop residues, pruning biomass, greenhouse by-products, or grass/silage. The examples provided in Appendix 1 (e.g. tomato or cucumber residues) are indicative and not limited. Applicants are responsible for clearly demonstrating how the selected feedstock qualifies as an underutilised agricultural residue and how it aligns with the selected processing concept, such as solid-state fermentation, as described in the Guide. Regarding funding of research institutes, the Open Call provides lump-sum grants per consortium, with a maximum of €50,000 per partner and €150,000 per consortium of three partners. The budget must be structured in Annex 6 according to eligible cost categories. Direct personnel costs are eligible if they reflect actual effort dedicated to the sub-project and are calculated transparently and proportionately. Indirect costs (overheads) could be up to 25% of the direct cost. In-kind contributions are not funded under the Open Call. Applicants are responsible for ensuring that all declared costs comply with the principles of sound financial management and are clearly justified in relation to the proposed activities.

**101. According to Section 6.2 of the Proposal Template (Annex 5), applicants are not requested to use the budget template and submit it as a separate pdf. file. If text is included in Section 6.2, it forms part of the proposal narrative and therefore counts towards the 15-page limit, as specified in the template instructions. All narrative content included in Annex 5 is counted within the page limit, except for the cover page and the Table of Contents.**

According to Section 6.2 of the Proposal Template (Annex 5), applicants are requested to use the budget template and submit it as a separate pdf. file. If text is included in Section 6.2, it forms part of the proposal narrative and therefore counts towards the 15-page limit, as specified in the template instructions. All narrative content included in Annex 5 is counted within the page limit, except for the cover page and the Table of Contents.

**102. We are filling Annex 6 “Budget template” and a question arose on the allocation of “a minimum 7% of the funding [...] to [...] dissemination activities”. Our intention was to allocate this budget mainly to the coordinator, having Partners 2 and 3 only person months on C&D. However, we see that if we do not allocate that minimum 7% to them as well, their cell gets red. Will this situation affect negatively the evaluation? Should we re-allocate the C&D budget to ensure that each partner has at least a 7% on C&D?**

Dissemination activities must comprise a minimum of 7% of each individual partner’s budget and, consequently, at least 7% of the total project budget. Therefore: The 7% requirement applies at partner level, not only at consortium level and, each partner must allocate at least 7% of its own budget to dissemination activities.

**103. (i) Is it possible to have the following consortium composition? Partner 1: Research institution 1; Partner 2: Research institution 2; Partner 3: Private-sector partner such as an olive mill, olive cooperative, or a large olive farm owner.**

**(ii) Regarding Annex 7, should it be signed by all project partners?**

**(iii) Regarding Annex 9, I understand it may relate to primary producers, cooperatives, start-ups, SMEs, or NGOs. If Partner 3 is an olive mill, cooperative, or company, would Annex 9 be required? If Partner 3 is not classified as an SME, is Annex 9 still required?**

**(iv) Concerning the bank account declaration, which organization is required to complete and sign this document? Is it only the coordinating institution, or each participating partner?**

(i) The proposed consortium structure is eligible, provided that it complies with the eligibility criteria set out in Annex 4, Section 2.2:

A consortium must consist of 2–3 partners.

It must include at least one technical partner.

It must include at least one partner from the public or private sector acting as an end user responsible for implementing, using, or validating the proposed process and business model under real-life conditions.

(ii) Annex 7 (Consortium Declaration) must be signed by the legal representative of each consortium partner. All signed documents must be merged into one single PDF and uploaded as one attachment, as described in Annex 4.

(iii) Annex 9 (SME Declaration) is required only for partners that qualify as SMEs or start-ups according to the EC definition. If Partner 3 is not classified as an SME, Annex 9 is not required for that partner. If more than one partner is an SME, all SME Declarations must be signed separately and merged into one single PDF file before upload.

(iv) During the contracting phase, each consortium partner must provide its own bank account information. Therefore, the bank account declaration must be completed and signed by each participating partner, not only by the coordinator.

**104. (i) The call states that Phases 1, 2, and 3 of the project should correspond to a maximum budget allocation of 20, 50, and 30%. This is how we planned the distribution, but our question is how should it be presented, as the budget template does not include section for indicating that part of budget allocation. Also, some costs are related to more than a one phase of the project.**

**(ii) Is it necessary to provide CVs of the key project team members and where these should be included?**

**(iii) It was indicated where to put the costs of dissemination in the budget form. If dissemination involve travel expenses, should these travel costs remain within dissemination budget category, or should travel-related dissemination costs be separated and reported as a part of travel cost category?**

**(iv) It was stated that title page and the table of contents are not included into page limit, but there is another page at the beginning of the template, before the project description. Could you please specify whether this page is included in the page count?**

**(v) The budget template is limited to one page. Could you advise how the budget should be presented within this limit when three institutions are participating in the project?**

(i) As indicated in Section 6.1 of the Proposal Template (Annex 5), the allocation of budget per phase (20%, 50%, 30%) should be reflected through the coherence between the work plan, timeline, and budget. There is no separate table in Annex 6 to formally break down the budget per phase. Therefore, applicants should ensure that the activities described under each phase in Section 6.1 are consistent with the overall financial allocation presented in Annex 6.

(ii) The Applicants' Guide does not require CVs to be attached as separate annexes. Instead, Section 4 of the Proposal Template requests a description of team members' education, expertise, and relevant experience. This information should be included directly within the 15-page proposal.

(iii) Travel costs must be placed under the Travel category in the Budget Template. If the travel relates to dissemination activities, it still remains under the Travel category, while ensuring that the overall dissemination allocation complies with the minimum 7% requirement per partner.

(iv) Could you please specify which page you are referring to in the template? Only the cover page and the Table of Contents are excluded from the 15-page limit.

(v) Each consortium partner must complete its own individual budget page within Annex 6. Therefore, in a consortium of three partners, Annex 6 will contain three separate one-page budget sheets, one per partner, compiled in the same file. The Budget Template (Annex 6) does not count toward the 15-page limit of the proposal. However, it should be completed clearly and concisely, respecting the provided format.

**Interested applicants after they register to the opencalls.fund platform can submit their additional questions to the designated “FAQ” tab until 5 June 2026 @ 17:00 CEST.**



# primary

**New business for farmers and cooperatives in rural areas by local upcycling solutions using underutilized agricultural feedstocks**

**Grant agreement ID: 101180167**