



**Fair food and trade systems for Africa through food
convergence innovation**

**Open Call 1 (OC1) addressed to research
and technology stakeholders**

**Annex 1
Call for Evaluators**



**Funded by
the European Union**

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List of Abbreviations

Term	Description
AfCFTA	The African Continental Free Trade Area. AfCFTA is one of the Flagship Projects of Agenda 2063 Africa's development framework. The AfCFTA aims at accelerating intra-African trade and boosting Africa's trading position in the global market by strengthening Africa's common voice and policy space in global trade negotiations.
ESR	Evaluation Summary Report. A report that all applicants receive after their proposal has been evaluated. Applicants can submit a request for redress if they believe there was a shortcoming in the evaluation process detailed in their ESR.
EC	European Commission. The executive branch of the European Union responsible for proposing legislation, implementing decisions, and overseeing EU programs.
EU	European Union. A political and economic union of 27 European countries.
FAQ	Frequently Asked Questions. A set of common questions and answers about the OC to support applicants.
FSTP	Financial Support to Third Parties. A mechanism used by the FCI4Africa project to provide funding through its Open Call to beneficiaries.
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation. The EU regulation governing the protection of personal data and privacy.
HE	Horizon Europe. The EU's main research and innovation funding programme.
IP	Intellectual Property. Creations of the mind (inventions, software, data, etc.) that can be legally protected.
IPR	Intellectual Property Rights. Legal rights that protect intellectual property, such as patents, copyrights, and trademarks.
MFI	Micronutrient Fortification Index. A scoring system that ranks companies or products based on their fortification performance and compliance with standards.
NTMs	Non-tariff Measures. Regulatory or procedural requirements (such as standards, certifications, inspections) that affect trade but are not tariffs.

OC	Open Call. An invitation for proposals through which external beneficiaries can apply for funding to carry out specific activities that support the project's objectives.
OCAB	Open Call Advisory Board. The board responsible for conducting the eligibility check of submitted proposals. It is composed of the coordinator (IITA), the scientific coordinator (WR), and the Open Call Manager (RFF).
PICS	Purdue Improved Crop Storage Bags. A hermetic solution that eliminates post-harvest losses and the need for pesticides.
TRL	Technology Readiness Level. A scale used to assess the maturity level of a technology.
UC(s)	Use Case(s). User-centred innovation environments where scientists, practitioners, civil society, and public authorities work together through a multi-actor approach. Each use case addresses a specific challenge by co creating, testing, and improving products, tools, or policy solutions.
VAT number	Value Added Tax number. A unique identification number assigned to businesses for Value Added Tax purposes. It is used in invoices, tax reporting, and financial transactions within and outside the EU.

1 The FCI4Africa project

The FCI4Africa project responds to the growing demand for sustainable, fair, and just food trade between Africa and Europe. Under the EU Green Deal, the Farm-to-Fork Strategy, and the Deforestation-Free Regulation. The agri-food products entering the EU must meet stricter environmental, social, and ethical criteria. These evolving rules can either limit or unlock opportunities for African producers and SMEs. In parallel, the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) is creating a single market of 1.3 billion people, harmonizing technical standards and non-tariff measures, and aligning with the African Union's Agenda 2063 to double productivity, cut post-harvest losses, and integrate African food systems into regional and global value chains.

FCI4Africa aims to bridge these two transformations by enabling ethical, traceable, and climate-resilient trade. It combines policy-oriented research with bottom-up innovation to ensure that sustainability standards translate into tangible benefits for smallholders, processors, and consumers. The project develops and tests digital tools, analytical methods, and participatory business models that verify product provenance, food safety, and social fairness; assess the impacts of non-tariff measures; and strengthen self-regulation and certification systems such as fortification and aflatoxin-safe indices. By linking farmers, SMEs, regulators, and certification bodies through data-driven and transparent systems, FCI4Africa supports a new generation of African agri-food products that are competitive, verifiable, and trusted in both domestic and international markets.

2 FCI4Africa Open Call 1 (OC1)

2.1 Open Call Specifics

FCI4Africa will launch its **first Open Call (OC1)** addressed to research and technology stakeholders (start-ups, SMEs, research organisations, and other multidisciplinary actors) to:

- test, validate and enhance the business concepts and tools of the project
- or
- develop ideas and tools that address specific challenges of FCI4Africa

Solutions **do not necessarily have to be tied** to FCI4Africa's existing Use Case topics as long as they align with the project's broader objectives. Specifically, solutions should address one of the following:

- Lack of sustainability, fairness and justness in the agri-food sector
- Difficulties in complying with new EU legislation and trade policies
- High certification costs creating barriers for African small-scale farmers
- Fragmentation of intra-African agricultural trade
- Limited transparency and data obstructing the integration of the informal sector
- Inconsistency of non-tariff measures across regions

Selected projects will be launched in November 2026 having an implementation timeframe of 12 months (until October 2027). The implementation period will be divided into 3 phases:

- Phase 1 – Design (3 months / November 2026-January 2027): Payment of the 20% of

the total grant [Deliverable: Activity plan];

- Phase 2 – Development (6 months / February 2027-July 2027): Payment of 50% of the total grant [Deliverable: Results demonstration];
- Phase 3 – Validation (3 months / August 2027-October 2027): Payment of the final 30% of the total grant [Deliverable: Report on dissemination activities and lessons learnt].

FCI4Africa will only accept applications from a **single applicant per proposal (no Consortia allowed)**.

In total, €600k will be allocated for financial support to third parties.

Open Calls	Total Amount	Sub-Project Size	No. of Projects
OC1	€400k	Up to €50k	≤8

The submission timeline for the OC1 for the proposals is 7 April 2026 to 30 June 2026.

2.2 opencalls.fund platform

The opencalls.fund platform is a digital platform for the management of applications for financial support to third parties and accelerator programs, developed and maintained by reframe.food. The FCI4Africa OC1 for Financial Support to Third Parties (FSTP) will be published through the opencalls.fund platform.

We are looking for evaluators!

- **Evaluators' profile**

We are looking for independent evaluators who will be able to assess the quality of applications received for the **FCI4Africa OC1**, shortly after its closure.

Evaluators must be:

- ➔ European - EU nationals Member States of the European Union (EU), including their outermost regions, as well as Overseas Countries and Territories linked to an EU Member, as well as nationals of Horizon Europe associated countries (full list [here](#)).
- ➔ Experienced in the agrifood sector and their academic, technical and/or industry knowledge surrounding **agriculture, food safety, climate change, biodiversity and sustainability**.
- ➔ Experienced in evaluating EC proposals or have similar experience.

The applying evaluator should not work for an organisation that aims to apply for the **FCI4Africa OC1** nor for an organisation participating in the **FCI4Africa consortium or its affiliates**¹.

All applying evaluators must declare beforehand any known conflicts of interest and must immediately inform the FCI4AfricaConsortium staff if they detect a conflict of interest during the evaluation. The evaluator's contract also requires evaluators to maintain strict

¹ According to HE programme: an affiliated entity is an entity that has a link with a beneficiary, in particular legal or capital link, which is neither limited to the project nor is established for the sole purpose of its implementation.

confidentiality throughout whole evaluation process.

All evaluators must follow all instructions given by the FCI4Africa Consortium to ensure this. Under no circumstances may an evaluator attempt to contact an applicant on his/her own account, during the evaluation process. Confidentiality rules must always be adhered to before, during, and after the evaluation. All external evaluators will sign a confidentiality declaration.

All evaluators must adhere to the EC's guiding principles for independent experts, including independence, impartiality, objectivity, accuracy and consistency.

The evaluators will be in charge of providing a neutral yet technical/scientific review of the received applications on the following aspects:

All eligible proposals will be assessed by two expert evaluators against the following **award criteria**:

- **Concept and feasibility** [Scoring 1-5; threshold 3] Proposed solutions must align with the Call objectives.
- **Technology readiness and innovation development** [Scoring 1-5; threshold 3] Projects must demonstrate the maturity of the proposed solution.
- **Impact & Exploitation** [Scoring 1-5; threshold 3] Applicants must demonstrate the project's potential to deliver measurable social, economic, or environmental benefits and outline strategies for dissemination and upscaling.
- **Organisational capacity and sufficiency** [Scoring 1-5; threshold 3] Applicants must provide credible evidence that the project delivery team has the necessary skills, resources and capacity to effectively deliver the project in the timeframe and budget as specified.

All award criteria have the same weight. Each award criterion can be scored from 1 to 5, with a threshold of 3 points per category, and a minimum of 12 points in total.

The full evaluation criteria of the OC1 are specified in the respective Open Call kit documents. In addition, the kit will be part of the evaluators' manual. The evaluation process per application as well as specific reimbursement of evaluators' efforts will be listed. It is important to note that the number of applications per evaluator depends on several factors: the time availability of the evaluators, the number of submitted applications, and the number of evaluators to be selected throughout the OC1.

- **Financial Benefits**

Evaluators will be compensated at a daily rate of €450, in accordance with European Commission rules. Two (2) evaluators will be assigned to each proposal, with a projected capacity of two (2) to four (4) proposal evaluations per day, depending on the volume of applications.

Payment will be made in Euros by bank transfer to personal accounts of the evaluators, up to 60 days after submission of the evaluations and reception of an invoice from the evaluator.

The minimum and maximum number of days per evaluator will depend on the number of applications received, and other factors such as the availability of the evaluator throughout the

process, etc.

- **Evaluation Procedure**

The entire evaluation process will take place remotely on the opencalls.fund platform; no physical meetings are planned. The evaluation process will start with a short briefing meeting (online), providing additional project context, and elaborating on the procedures and expectations, with a particular focus on the evaluation criteria and the nuances of the different categories. Guidelines for the evaluators will also be shared at this time.

Each proposal will be assigned to two (2) evaluators. Each evaluator is expected to individually score each evaluation criterion and provide comments that justify their score. Evaluators are expected to work within their expertise for each criterion and ensure that any comments made align with the score they give. After completing their evaluations, each pair of evaluators will have to consolidate their evaluations into a single report, ensuring that they reach a mutual agreement on the proposal's merits. The process will be monitored and facilitated by the OC Manager. This collaborative process ensures consistency in judgement and guards against bias, ultimately leading to the selection of the most deserving proposals. The effort of consolidation effort is included in the overall fee and is not reimbursed separately.

If the difference in total scores between evaluators is significant (>5), a consensus meeting between the two evaluators will be held to seek adjustments. In case the consensus meeting is unsuccessful, an online interview of the applicant by a third external evaluator will be conducted.

- **Evaluators Selection Procedure**

Evaluators will be selected by the FCI4Africa OC Advisory Board based on their competences and needs of the OC1. Only the selected evaluators will be communicated via email.

- **Expression of Interest**

If you are interested in being an evaluator, first you need to register as a user on the opencalls.fund platform. Then you can proceed to apply as an evaluator, by filling in all the required fields and uploading your CV (as .pdf) - the application shouldn't take more than 5 minutes!

For Evaluators

Joining our platform as an evaluator comes with a multitude of benefits tailored specifically for those engaged in assessing innovative projects under Horizon Europe open calls. As an evaluator in our open calls, you gain the opportunity to contribute your expertise to the advancement of groundbreaking EU funded projects while enhancing your professional profile in the industry.

Apply now

Apply [here](#)

If you know someone else who might be qualified for this task and might be interested, please forward this to them. By applying to FCI4Africa Call for Evaluators, applicants automatically accept all the rules and conditions described below:

- **Tentative Timeline of Activities for Open Call***

FCI4Africa OC1 duration for evaluators: April 2026

Eligibility check of the received evaluators' applications: May-June 2026

Contracting with selected evaluators: July 2026

Evaluation of Open Call proposals by the external evaluators: July 2026 - August 2026

* Dates may be revised/amended due to unforeseen events and situations.

- **Evaluators' Liability**

All evaluators will be required to sign a declaration of no conflict of interest and a non-disclosure agreement with the FCI4Africa consortium prior to the start of evaluation.

By applying to the FCI4Africa Call for evaluators and registering to the opencalls.fund platform, the expert:

- ➔ understands that applying (registration) does not guarantee the selection as an evaluator for any of the Open Calls.
- ➔ Understands that a signed Code of Conduct and a Declaration of Honour (DoH) will have to be provided, along with any other requested documents if the applicant is selected to serve as an evaluator for a specific Open Call published on the opencalls.fund platform.
- ➔ acknowledges that for each Open Call, the designated coordination team will contact them to confirm their availability to conduct evaluations within the specified time frame. This may also include participation in a briefing session prior to the evaluation and, if required, a debriefing session after the selection process, if required. Specific timelines

and requirements will be communicated in advance for each Open Call.

- ➔ confirms the interest in being informed about the future opportunities to act as an evaluator on ongoing and upcoming Open Calls that will be conducted on opencalls.fund platform.
- ➔ assures that he/she will only evaluate the applications of applicants for whom she/he does not have a Conflict of Interest (Col).

- **Admissibility**

- ➔ The Applicant must be a European (EU nationals (Member States of the European Union (EU), including their outermost regions, as well as Overseas Countries and Territories linked to EU Member) as well as nationals of Horizon Europe associated countries (full list [here](#)). (**Note:** if you are not a citizen of these countries, but a resident/taxpayer in one of these countries, you are still eligible to become an evaluator).
- ➔ Applications can be submitted at any time starting from 7 April 2026, and they should be submitted before 30 April 2026.

Applications must be submitted electronically via the opencalls.fund platform electronic submission system as indicated in this call, using the form provided inside opencalls.fund platform, and a CV, as .pdf, must be attached as part of the application. Paper or email submissions will NOT be accepted.

Applications must be complete for all parts, and the CV should be readable, accessible and printable.

If the admissibility criteria are met, then the evaluation of the expert will be performed by the Open Call Advisory Board. To formalise the collaboration, unless otherwise specified, a service contract will be signed between the OC Treasurer and the evaluators.

By applying for evaluators, interested applicants automatically accept the Guidelines in this Call for Evaluators and all the guidelines and requirements emerging from documentation included in the Open Call kit.

- **Conflict of Interest**

Evaluators must not have a conflict of interest at the time of their appointment and must sign a contract declaring that no such conflict exists. They also must inform the consortium should such a conflict arise in any of the applications they have been assigned. When a potential conflict of interest is reported by the evaluator or brought to the attention of the consortium by any means, the project consortium will analyse the circumstances and any available objective of information. If the consortium determines that there is a conflict of interest, the evaluator will be excluded from the evaluation of that application. All potential conflicts of interest will be assessed carefully. Please see more info [here](#).

- **Confidentiality**

Evaluators are bound by confidentiality, as all information relating to the assessment process is strictly confidential. They are not allowed to disclose any information about the applications

submitted and results of the assessment and selection to anyone. They are also not allowed to use the ideas of the application for their own purposes.

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