ERA-Net Cofund on Sustainable Food production and consumption (SUSFOOD2)

Evaluation and selection Guidelines

March 2017

Overview

Definitions

» The **Evaluation Team (ET)** consists of the ERA-NET SUSFOOD2 WP3 team and is the central contact point for all issues around the evaluation procedures of the call.

» The SUSFOOD2 **Call Office** is hosted by Projektträger Jülich, Forschungszentrum Jülich GmbH, Germany, and is the central contact point for all technical issues around the online evaluation tool.

» The **International Evaluation Committee (IEC)** is a group of experts which will peer-review the submitted proposals in the framework of SUSFOOD2. It will be composed of international experts based on their acknowledged scientific excellence in the research areas covered by the submitted proposals.

» A **rapporteur** is member of the IEC who shall report on a proposal during the evaluation meetings.

» The **Call Group (CG)** is the decision-making body and consists of one representative of each ERA-NET **SUSFOOD2** partner organisation providing cash funding to the Co-funded Call (**Funding Party**).

» Each Funding Party in this Co-funded Call has nominated a **National/Regional Contact Point (NCP/RCP)** to provide information on national/regional funding rules and procedures.

1. Timeline

Launch of the Co-funded Call and IEC constitution	
09.01.2017	Launch of the Co-funded Call
10.02.2017	Deadline for nomination of experts to the IEC by CG
27.02.2017	Selection of IEC Chair by CG
27.02.2017	IEC constitution completed
First step: submission and evaluation of pre-proposals	
13.03.2017 – 12:00 CET	Deadline for pre-proposal submission
24.03.2017	Call eligibility and national/regional eligibility checks completed
29.03.2017	CG telephone-conference on eligibility
03.04.2017	Start of pre-proposal evaluation by the IEC members (memo sent to the IEC members)
07.04.2017	IEC web-conference / tutorial
12.04.2017	Confirmation of No Conflict of Interest by experts
26.05.2017	Deadline for pre-proposal evaluation (online)
01.06.2017	Deadline for consensus pre-proposals evaluation reports
20.06.2017	CG meeting step 1: selection of pre-proposals

23.06.2017	Communication of eligibility check and evaluation outcomes to the research project coordinators –
26.06.2017	Start of step 2
Second step: submission and evaluation of full proposals	
08.09.2016 – 12:00 CET	Deadline for full proposal submission
15.09.2017	Deadline for clearing phase
19.09.2017	CG telephone-conference on eligibility step 2
10.11.2017	Deadline for experts full proposal evaluation (online)
15.11.2017	Deadline for consensus full-proposals evaluation reports (online)
28/29.11.2017	IEC meeting step 2: ranking of full proposals
13.12.2017	CG meeting step 2: selection of full proposals
15.12.2017	Communication of the evaluation outcomes and the funding decision to the research project coordinators
06.01.2018	Publication of the list of selected proposals on SUSFOOD2 website

2. Purpose of this document

Every call for proposals is dependent on finding skilled experts in the area of the research topics defined by the ERA-NET scope who are willing to contribute with their expertise to evaluate the research proposals submitted during the call procedure. This document is intended to serve as a guideline for experts and the Call Group and will provide some background on the ERA-NET on SUStainable FOOD production and consumption (Acronym: SUSFOOD2), on the evaluation process and the conditions that will apply for experts.

3. ERA-NET SUSFOOD2 and scope of the Co-funded Call

The strategic goal of SUSFOOD2, fully in line with the EU bioeconomy and food policies, is to further reinforce cooperation in research, development and innovation between EU members and associated States in order to maximize the contribution of research to the development of more sustainable food systems from production to consumption.

The scope includes the entire food supply chain with the main focus on food chain sustainability beyond the farm gate. The farm level will be considered if it has direct impact on the sustainability of the other steps in the food chain.

SUSFOOD2 promotes a cross-sectorial and multi-disciplinary approach from biology to food engineering and social sciences. It addresses the following socio-economic and environmental goals:

- To develop sustainable food systems from production to consumption, to increase food production sustainably while reducing waste in food supply chain and limiting environmental impacts ;
- To improve the quality of life by improving food quality in a sustainable way and to ensure the resilience of the food supply chain;
- To encourage sustainable consumer behaviors and food choices;
- To improve competitiveness and economic growth in the European food industry with special attention to SMEs.

Research/Research and Innovation project consortia should apply to one of the four topics, which will be funded according to the budget table 1:

Topic 1: Innovation in food processing technologies and products

Topic 2: Providing added value, increased resource efficiency and reduction of waste in sustainable food systems

Topic 3: Understanding consumer behavior and food choices

Topic 4: Harmonisation of the methods and metrics for integrated assessment of sustainability of food products and food patterns

4. Management bodies involved in the evaluation procedure

4.1. Evaluation Team (ET)

The Evaluation Team (ET) is the central contact point for all issues around the evaluation procedures of the call and acts as the link between the IEC and the CG. CDTI will perform tasks in relation to the evaluation process and will also serve as contact point for the independent observer. GDAR will contribute to the constitution and management of the IEC.

- For coordination and administrative issues regarding selection of experts, assignments to pre and full proposals, please contact:

General Directorate of Agricultural Research and Policy (GDAR), Turkey

Ahmet Budaklıer
Phone: +90 3123157623/1338
email: abudaklier@tagem.gov.tr

email is the preferred contact option.

- For issues related to the evaluation process (of both pre and full proposals), please contact:

Centro para el Desarrollo Tecnológico Industrial (CDTI), Spain

Carlos Sánchez Lafuente
Phone:: +34 915815505
email: subaet@cdti.es

email is the preferred contact option.

4.2.   Call Office

The Call Office will provide administrative and technical support to applicants regarding the call, call documents, procedures and evaluation platform. It is the primary point of contact between the research project consortium and the SUSFOOD2 funding partners for all general matters in relation to the call.

Forschungszentrum Juelich GmbH (Juelich), Germany:

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4.3.   Call Group (CG)

The CG is responsible for the overall direction, Transnational Project selection for funding and follow-up of Funded Projects. The CG provides the national/regional annexes for the Call Announcement, thereby confirming their participation in the Co-funded Call. They shall provide written commitment of available funds for Transnational Projects selected in the Co-funded Call.

The CG had nominated NCP/RCP to support participants on national/regional eligibility and selection criteria during proposal submission.

The CG is in charge of:

» approval of Call Announcement including timelines, selection of call topics, guidelines and rules for participation (call eligibility criteria),

» nomination and approval of the IEC,

» nomination and approval of independent observer,

> » follow-up and monitoring of Funded Projects.

4.4. International Evaluation Committee (IEC)

4.4.1. Constitution of the IEC.

The IEC is composed of international experts of recognized competence, based on their acknowledged scientific excellence in the research areas covered in the Cofunded call. The IEC is headed by the chairperson, selected by the Call Group (CG), from among the IEC members.

The formation of the IEC involves the following stages:

1. The Call Group members have suggested experts for the constitution of a pool of experts with sufficient expertise in topics relevant to the co-funded call. From the pool of experts, 3 available experts have been selected per each proposal for review by the ET and approved by the CG. In all cases the ET and CG have to make sure that there is no conflict of interest, and in this regard, members of consortia submitting proposals cannot be evaluators.

2. The ET has contacted the experts to request their participation. These experts were asked whether they have potential conflict of interest at this point (e.g. they are submitting a proposal), whether they were interested in reviewing proposals and whether they were available for the evaluation, including the IEC meeting.

3. According to the availability of experts, the IEC has been constituted.

4. Each IEC member has to sign the Agreements on Confidentiality Disclosure and Code of Conduct (Annex A) and to declare the absence of any conflict of interest before having access to the whole proposals. A scanned copy of these signed agreements must be uploaded to the evaluation system (see section 4) before starting the individual remote evaluation. A hard copy of the signed agreements should be sent by post or provided to the evaluation team during the IEC meeting.

The list of the IEC members will not be made public.

4.4.2. Tasks of the IEC

The IEC shall peer review pre-proposals (step 1 of the call procedure) and full proposals (step 2) and provide consolidated evaluation feedback for both evaluation steps.

Eligible pre-proposals (first step) will be evaluated by **3 experts** per pre-proposal. In case of contradictory votes, one additional expert could be invited for review to cast the vote. Inconsistencies or potential conflicts in the evaluation may be sorted out by the Chair. Evaluation of pre-proposals will be done by remote evaluation (online).

Full proposals will be evaluated by **3 experts**. If possible, the experts assigned for the evaluation of full proposals will be the same as in the pre-proposals. For the second step, an IEC meeting will be held to review the analysis of the experts and to agree to a consensus on the evaluation of each full-

proposal. The committee will rank all the proposals in order of merit (in line with the mandatory step 2 evaluation criteria: scientific excellence, potential impact and implementation/management). An independent observer will overlook the evaluation process and take part in the meeting.

The tasks of IEC Chair are:

The chair needs to be available during the whole time of evaluation process and is responsible for guiding the overall evaluation of proposals. His/her tasks will include:

» if required: to assist the ET in assigning the proposals to the experts,

» to participate in the introductory web-conference/tutorial,

» to attend and chair the IEC evaluation meeting for full proposals (28/29.11.2017):

» to attend, if needed, the CG meetings after both evaluations

› for pre-proposals on 16.06.2017
› for full proposals on 13.12.2017

The tasks of the IEC members are:

» to participate in the introductory web-conference/tutorial.

» to evaluate the assigned pre-proposals between 03.04 and 26.05 2017

» to provide the evaluation results including relevant comments online on time

» to evaluate the assigned full proposals between 20.09 and 15.11 2017

» to attend the IEC evaluation meeting for full proposals and participate in the discussions

» to be willing to act as rapporteur for a proposal

The tasks of the rapporteurs:

Each proposal will have a rapporteur, appointed from among the evaluators who were assigned to it. All evaluators will be required to act as rapporteur in 2-4 proposals and attend the evaluation meeting to present the proposal and the online evaluation results. The rapporteur is also responsible for summarizing the joint evaluation result including comments or conditions which will be passed to the applicants.

Rapporteur specific tasks, in addition to the task as IEC member, are:

» to coordinate the experts' feedbacks on the proposals,

» to consolidate the feedback on the proposals to be sent to the applicants and fill in the evaluation tool,

» to propose to the ET, the invitation of an additional expert to review a proposal in case of disagreements on the evaluations.

» to inform the ET in case the experts cannot agree on a common judgement of a proposal

4.4.3. Assignment of Reviewers and Rapporteurs

The final number of members in the IEC will depend on the number of pre-proposals submitted, the topics addressed and the expertise of evaluators.

The ET will be the contact point for IEC and will handle all coordination and administrative issues related the evaluations and meetings of the IEC.

The ET will primarily assign to each pre and full proposal 3 reviewers from the IEC. These assignments will be approved by the CG. One of the reviewers will be designated as rapporteur.

After assignment, the experts will receive an e-mail with log-in details and instructions on how to access the SUSFOOD2 online evaluation tool (see section 5.1.2.). A summary and research consortium team information of the assigned proposals will be made available to the expert, only when he/she has downloaded, signed and uploaded the agreements on Confidentiality Disclosure and Code of Conduct (Annex A).

4.4.4. Evaluation Costs

IEC members will receive a fee for their remote evaluation that is fixed at a rate of EUR 20 per pre-proposal and EUR 100 per full-proposal.

The costs for travel, accommodation and meals for the IEC Meeting will be covered by SUSFOOD2.

IEC members will receive compensation per assisting to IEC meeting of EUR 200.

5. Evaluation of the Proposals

5.1. Step 1: pre-proposals

Trans-national project pre-proposals received in the SUSFOOD2 co-funded call will first be checked for eligibility and suitability on a national/regional level. Further to this, the IEC will be put in place and asked to evaluate the project pre-proposals.

5.1.1. Eligibility check

The purpose of the eligibility check is to ensure that the projects comply with all the transnational call requirements before the evaluation phase. After the submission deadline all pre-proposals will be checked by the ET against the following mandatory call eligibility criteria:

» The transnational consortium must consist of at least three independent eligible legal entities from at least three SUSFOOD2 partner countries

- » The application must be written in English;

- » Projects should have a maximum duration of 36 months;

- » The requested total budget cannot exceed 1.5 M € per proposal (requested funding);

- » Total eligible budget of a partner cannot exceed 70 % of the total eligible project budget in order to achieve balanced partnerships and ensure that responsibility and risks are shared;

- » Institutions from countries that do not fund the SUSFOOD2 call or industry / academia not fundable by their country are welcome to participate in project proposals as associated project partners, on the condition that they are proven financially covered. They are not taken into account in the minimum requirement of eligible partners and countries in the SUSFOOD2 eligibility criteria and cannot apply as coordinators of the research proposal consortium.

- » Registration to the (MKB) is compulsory

Pre-proposals in line with these general criteria will be checked for national/regional eligibility by the CG with regard to national/regional regulations.

After the international and national/regional eligibility check, a CG telephone-conference will be arranged to decide the final list of eligible pre-proposals to be sent to peer review by experts.

The failure of one partner within the consortium to meet the national/regional eligibility criteria will result in the rejection of the entire proposal.

Proposals passing the eligibility check will be forwarded to the evaluators for assessment.

5.1.2. Peer review of pre-proposals

The objective of this first step is to identify the best proposals to proceed to Step 2, and ensure the balance between the requested and available funds at the national level.

Following the assignment of the eligible pre- proposals to the reviewers and rapporteurs, as defined in section 4.4.3., the evaluation of the pre- proposals proceeds as follows:

1. The individual log-in codes provided to the reviewers will give them access to the summary and research consortium team information of their assigned pre-proposals. After declaring the non-existence of a conflict of interest for a particular pre-proposal, the reviewer will have access to that pre-proposal. If the reviewer declares a conflict of interest for the proposal, he/she will not be able to access that proposal.

2. Reviewers write evaluation reports according to the evaluation criteria defined in section 5.1.3. and employing the Evaluation Form Template (Annex D). For each criterion, scores from 0 to 5 (half-points are allowed) are awarded (See Annex C). It is important that the written statements are sufficiently detailed and that they are **in line with the score.**

3. Even if a pre-proposal is considered to be out of scope for the call, it will be scored. An explanation of why the proposal is out of scope will be required.

4. Any proposal, which seems to contravene fundamental ethical principles, shall not be selected, and may be excluded from the evaluation and selection procedure. Judgment of the significance of ethical issues will be made by using the criteria published by the Commission in its guidelines for the Horizon 2020 Framework Programme: http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/grants_manual/hi/ethics/h2020_hi_ethics-self-assess_en.pdf

5. Rapporteurs have to read and assess the individual evaluation reports. If a report is unclear or not detailed enough, the reviewer should be asked to amend the report.

6. Prior to the CG meeting, the rapporteur compiles a consensus evaluation report based on the three written reports (2 from the others reviewers and her or his own). This consensus report has to be approved by all reviewers of the individual proposal before the CG meeting. All the written reports will be made accessible to the CG.

5.1.3. Evaluation criteria for pre-proposals

All eligible pre-proposals will be evaluated by 3 external experts according to the following criteria.

- » Coherence and pertinence of the objectives, contribution to the call topics
- » Scientific quality, innovation potential (including multidisciplinarity and cross-sectorial aspects)
- » Appropriateness of the research methodology, feasibility, adequacy of the budget
- » Quality of the consortium, complementarity among partners, added value of the transnational cooperation
- » Potential impact of projects results

A ranked list of pre-proposals will be produced based on the final scores, resulting of the sum of the individual scores.

5.1.4. Evaluation results (pre-proposals)

For each pre-proposal, the rapporteur will have to prepare an evaluation report which clarifies the scoring of the criteria. This will be done based on the comments of all experts that have assessed the proposal. It shall include the average score for each criterion as well as the overall final score for the pre-proposal. It will have to be delivered 1 week before the CG meeting at the latest (09.06.2017). The evaluation report will be provided as feedback to the applicants on their proposals, too, as well as any recommendation asked by experts and/or CG in order to improve full-proposals.

5.1.5. Selection of pre-proposals

Further to the outcome of the expert's evaluation, a CG meeting will be held to discuss the selection of Trans-national project proposals to be invited to the second step.

The CG will decide which eligible, peer-reviewed pre-proposals will be invited to step 2. This will be done in such a way that:

» Primarily, the selection process will follow the ranking list delivered, according to the scores given by the IEC.

» in order to avoid oversubscription, the total requested budget for each individual participating funding agency (or country in the case where national/regional partners can mutualise their funding) should not exceed the available national/regional funding by three-four times at this stage.

Project coordinators will be informed of the outcome of the selection (including consolidated feedback from the experts) electronically by the SUSFOOD2 Call office.

5.2.   Step 2: full-proposals

5.2.1.   Clearing Phase

The aim of this phase is to verify that the eligibility criteria already done in step one remains unchanged.

For this, ET will check the full-proposals against the mandatory call eligibility criteria and the CG will check for national/regional eligibility.

Full-proposals should accord to both the national/regional **and** the call eligibility criteria to be eligible for peer review.

5.2.2.   Peer review of full-proposals

Following the assignment of the eligible full- proposals to the reviewers and rapporteurs, the evaluation of the full- proposals proceeds as follows:

1. The individual log-in codes provided to the reviewers will give them access to the summary and consortium team of their assigned full-proposals. After declaring the non-existence of a conflict of interest for a particular full-proposal, the reviewer will have access to that full-proposal. If the reviewer declares a conflict of interest for the proposal, he/she will not be able to access that proposal. If an evaluator has already reviewed the related pre-proposal this step will not be necessary.

2. Reviewers write evaluation reports according to the evaluation criteria defined in section 5.2.3. and employing the Evaluation Form Template (Annex D). For each criterion, scores from 0 to 5 (half-points are allowed) are awarded. It is important that the written statements are sufficiently detailed and that they are in line with the score.

4. Sufficiently in advance of the IEC meeting, rapporteurs read and assess the individual evaluation reports. If a report is unclear or not detailed enough, the reviewer should be asked to amend the report.

5. Prior to the IEC meeting, the rapporteur compiles a consensus evaluation report based on all written reports (from the other reviewers and her or his own). This consensus report has to be approved by all reviewers of the individual proposal before the IEC meeting. This approval has to be given via email / telephone conference and has to be made transparent to the participants of the IEC meeting. All the written reports will be made accessible to the CG.

5.2.3. Evaluation criteria for full-proposals

All eligible full proposals will be evaluated by an international peer review Evaluation Panel based on three criteria: **'Scientific or Technological Excellence', 'Impact' and 'Quality and Efficiency of Implementation'.**

However, the Call Group may develop some further evaluation sub-criteria (available later in the guidelines for the evaluation of full proposals).

A scoring system from 0 to 5 (defined in Annex C) will be used to evaluate each criterion. The threshold for individual criteria is 3. The final score results of the sum of the 3 individual scores, all of them contributing with the same weight. An overall threshold may be settled upon decision of the CG. A ranked list of proposals will be produced based on the final scores.

5.2.4. International Evaluation Committee Meeting

The IEC will hold one meeting for consensus discussion that marks the completion of the evaluation procedure.

The Chairperson must ensure that the IEC meeting is conducted properly, that there is full participation of evaluators and that all relevant matters are discussed and that effective decisions are made and carried out, mainly the delivering of the ranking list of proposals.

The Funding agencies/ministries representatives may participate as observers in the IEC meeting. The observers shall not participate in the discussions of the IEC members.

At the IEC meeting:

1. The rapporteur summarises the content of the proposal and presents the results of the consensus report.
2. The other two reviewers may add further information giving their own view on the proposal.
3. The outcome of the discussion for each proposal will be the marks agreed upon within the panel and a final consensus report for each proposal.
4. Thresholds will be applied to the scores (see Annex C). Proposals not meeting the thresholds will not be recommended for funding and are not discussed further.
5. For all proposals at and above the threshold, the ranking list is established in an iterative process, starting with the marks agreed upon for the final consensus report.
6. The rapporteur for a given proposal writes the corresponding final consensus report, based on the discussion and the decisions taken during the IEC meeting.

The results of the evaluation process are thus:

» a final consensus report for each proposal, written by the rapporteur and agreed with all reviewers and IEC members, including scores for each criterion and overall score; and

» a ranking list for all proposals at or above the threshold.

5.2.5.   IEC Decision Making / Ranking List

The decisions of the IEC are elaborated collectively, preferably by consensus: unanimous agreement or consensus driven by majority. All members shall have the opportunity to formulate their own views.

If no unanimous agreement is reached, a voting procedure will be launched by the chairperson (as many times as deemed necessary). The procedure can also be launched after the request of at least 1/3 of the members of the IEC and any member may request it a maximum three times during the meeting (these requests cannot be rejected).

In general, the voting procedure consists in votes by show of hands (if it is deemed necessary, a vote by secret ballot can be undertaken following similar rules):

1. The chairperson formulates the rationale for the voting procedure.
2. The participants to the voting procedure are those members of the IEC who did not declare any conflict of interest.
3. The decision corresponds to the option that gathered at least a simple majority among members of the IEC taking part in the vote.
4. In case of equality of votes, the vote of the chairperson counts for 2.

The chairperson, assisted by the ET, keeps record of the discussions and the ranking list. All this information is to be kept confidential and made accessible only to the members of the IEC, the observers and the CG.

5.2.6.   Final Consensus Reports

The final consensus reports are the main part of the minutes of the meeting and should reflect the relative position of the proposals on the ranking list. They should present the strengths and the weaknesses of the proposal (for each criterion) together with some general comments and recommendations. The report should be based on facts and solely on proposal content.

The report must be written in a correct, respectful and understandable language and should neither indicate nor suggest anything concerning personal information about the rapporteur and/or the reviewers.

When writing the final consensus reports, the IEC members shall:

- avoid the use of the first person or equivalent: "I think…" or "This reviewer finds…";
- always use dispassionate and analytical language: avoid dismissive statements about the consortium members, the proposed work, or the scientific field concerned;
- avoid asking questions, as the applicants will not be able to answer them;

- evaluate the proposed work and not the work they consider should have been proposed.

5.2.7. Selection of full proposals

A final decision on funding will be taken by the CG based on the ranking list drawn up by the IEC and the availability of funds. The overall aim will be to use the available funds, including the financial contribution of the European Commission, to fund as many projects as possible following the ranking list. Consequently, projects will be selected according to the following rules:

1. Trans-national project proposals with a higher ranking go first.
2. Trans-national project proposals are funded top down.

In order to ensure the best possible use of the EU-Top-Up, a certain percentage (around 50%; the exact percentage will be fixed by CG decision after the ranking list has been drawn) of the financial contribution of the European Commission is allocated to each individual Party participating in the co-funded call, proportionally to its budget. The remaining financial contribution of the European Commission, called "Gap Filling" will be used as Real Common Pot to fill funding gaps so as to follow the ranking list.

After this process, the final ranked list of Trans-national projects to be funded will be approved by the CG in view of the available public funding, and will be followed by the subsequent national/regional approval.

Project coordinators will be informed of the outcome (including the consolidated feedback from the experts) electronically by the SUSFOOD Call Office.

5.2.8. Finalisation of the Co-funded Call

At the end of the selection of projects recommended for funding, the following information will be sent to the European Commission:

- » the ranking list(s) of the projects
- » the observers' report on the evaluation
- » the joint selection list of the projects to be funded
- » Commitment on availability of funds.

6. Independent observer

Paul Wiley has been appointed as independent observer of SUSFOOD Co-funded call.

He shall assess the conformity of the implementation of the joint call and, in particular, review the proper implementation of the independent international peer review and the establishment of the ranking list of transnational projects. The observer will participate in the **International Evaluation Committee (IEC)** of the evaluation and selection procedure.

Annex A: AGREEMENTS

Evaluator: **EVALUATOR´s DATA**

Call Office

Evaluation Team
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Ministry of Food Agriculture and Livestock
General Directorate of Agricultural Research and Policy
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DATE (set placeholder, position must not be changed)

Confidentiality Disclosure Agreement

I hereby undertake to treat as confidential all and any information that I receive while participating in the work of the SUSFOOD2 Evaluation Panel and evaluating SUSFOOD2 project proposals, to use this information solely for the purpose of evaluation of the proposals, not to disclose it to any third party and not to make it publicly available or accessible in any way, except with the prior written consent of the SUSFOOD2 consortium.

I understand that this confidentiality disclosure agreement is binding towards any national authority, who has appointed me as an evaluator and towards (and for the benefit of) any applicant submitting the project proposal to the SUSFOOD2 calls for proposals. Furthermore, I understand that this confidentiality disclosure agreement concerns all and any information in any form that comes to my knowledge during my participation in the work of the SUSFOOD2 Evaluation Panel and evaluating SUSFOOD2 project proposals.

I understand that I shall be bound by this confidentiality disclosure agreement as on the date of receipt of this signed letter by the Call Office, and that this confidentialy should be maintained even after the SUSFOOD2 Evaluation Panel has performed its duties or after my participation in the work of the SUSFOOD2 Evaluation Panel has ended.

I will not identify myself as a reviewer to the applicant(s) or to any third party, while the SUSFOOD2 Call Office will ensure confidentiality concerning my role as reviewer as well.

I will only address any questions concerning a proposal to the funding organization(s) exclusively (or the call office) and not to the applicant(s).

Code of Conduct AGREEMENT

Fundamental principles of good research practice and peer-review are essential for research integrity. All parties involved directly or indirectly in the evaluation must ensure the transparency of the process, the evaluation criteria published are respected equally for all proposals, and public funds are well used:

1. Experts as members of the IEC are chosen for their technical or scientific or industrial expertise to cover all the topics addressed by the submitted proposals.

2. All parties involved directly or indirectly in the evaluation must act objectively, with no self-interested motives. They do not represent their company, organisation or establishment.

3. The reviewers shall evaluate the proposals based solely upon the information contained in the proposals.

4. The reviewers shall finish the individual written assessment for pre-proposals by 26.05.2017, at the latest and by 10.11.2017 for full-proposals; shall be available for discussions with other evaluators for the consolidation of the consensus report and agree to provide contact details to other evaluators.

5. The rapporteurs shall finish the draft consensus pre-proposals evaluation reports by 01.06.2017, at the latest and by 15.11.2017 for consensus full-proposals evaluation reports; they shall be available to moderate the discussions; they shall finish the final consensus evaluation reports after the IEC meeting.

6. At the IEC meeting, decisions must be taken collectively by the IEC members after all arguments have been heard. Furthermore, decisions must be substantiated.

7. Opinions expressed during IEC meetings as well as information which parties are the first to obtain have to be kept confidential. The substance of the IEC debates must remain secret and the individual positions must not be divulged.

8. Minutes will be kept for those meetings during which decisions are reached. These minutes will be circulated to IEC members and observers for verification and approval.

9. IEC members should refrain in all cases from identifying external experts to third parties, and from divulging any other information which could compromise their anonymity. Likewise, reviewers cannot contact the applicants nor the other reviewers during the individual evaluation of proposals.

10. If any reviewer is subject to any pressure whatsoever from a project partner, she or he must immediately notify the Evaluation Team.

11. If there is a conflict of interest, the concerned person must inform the Evaluation Team as soon as finding that a conflict exists. The necessary measures will be taken to ensure that the related decision and discussion will not be biased, or suspected to be so (e.g. in requesting the concerned person to leave the room when the project in question is being discussed).

12. The chairperson may, on his or her own initiative, consult the Evaluation Team in respect to a real or possible conflict of interests, which has been brought to his or her attention by any means whatsoever.

13. Conflicts of interests as well as the methods used to handle these situations should be included in the IEC meeting minutes.

I agree to the rules of the confidentiality disclosure agreement,
I undertake to abide by the Code of Conduct for Reviewers of the SUSFOOD2 Call.

☐ No   ☐ Yes

Signature	

This agreement enters into force on the date of receipt of this signed letter by the Call Office/ Evaluation team.

Annex B: Declaration of Conflict of Interest

I will refrain from reviewing the proposal if a conflict of interest exists or could be perceived to exist. I understand that there is a conflict of interest if I stand to profit professionally, financially or personally from approval or rejection of the proposal; if in the past five years I have published with, cooperated with or worked at the same company or research unit as the applicant or any of the project workers; if I have fundamental differences of scientific opinion with any applicant; or if I'm a close person [(*)] of the applicant or any of the co-workers, either professional or private.

If any such conflict of interest exists or arises, I will inform the Evaluation Team.

During the IEC meeting, even if have not evaluated a specific proposal, in case of a possible conflict of interest with it, I will leave the room during the discussion of this proposal.

(*) A close person is:

- spouse (also de facto), child, grandchild, sibling, parent, grandparent or a person otherwise especially close to the person (e.g. fiancé/e or a close friend), as well as their spouses (also de facto)
- sibling of the person's parent or his/her spouse (also de facto), a child of the person's sibling, the person's previous spouse (also de facto)
- child, grandchild, sibling, parent or grandparent of the person's spouse as well as their spouses (also de facto), a child of a sibling of the person's spouse
- half-relative comparable to the above mentioned people

Annex C: Scoring system and thresholds

The scoring scheme for pre-proposals and full proposals is as follows:

0	Weak	The proposal shows severe flaws that are intrinsic to the proposed project. The criterion under examination is not addressed or cannot be judged due to missing or incomplete information.
1	Poor	The proposal addresses the criterion unsatisfactorily or in an inadequate manner. It shows serious inherent weaknesses resulting in the need of substantial modification or improvement.
2	Fair	The proposal broadly addresses the criterion; however, it contains some weaknesses and elements that can be improved.
3	Good	The proposal addresses the criterion well; however, it contains few elements that could be improved.
4	Very Good	The proposal is really good in international comparison and contains no significant elements to be improved. It addresses the criterion very well, although certain improvements are still possible.
5	Excellent	The proposal stands out with exceptional novelty, innovation and progress of science at global level. It successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion in question. Any shortcomings are minor

Any full-proposal receiving a mean score below 3 for one of the main criteria will not be selected for funding (threshold 3/5).

Guidelines: Evaluators will be required to provide a single score for each of the evaluation criteria using the scoring system aforementioned. Evaluators are not required to provide a score for each sub-criterion (if any) but they should consider how each sub-criterion (if any) has been addressed when allocating the score for a criterion.

*In addition to providing a score for each of the criteria, evaluators must also provide comments which explain and support their score for each criterion. Therefore, evaluators have to identify **strengths and weaknesses** (if any) for each criterion and should provide context for their comments based on the application, i.e., evaluators will be asked to score proposals as they were submitted, rather than on their potential if certain changes were to be made. When an evaluator identifies **substantial shortcomings**, he/she must reflect this by awarding a lower score for the criterion concerned. There should be consistency between the numerical scores and written comments.*

Evaluators must also provide an "Overall evaluation" comment for each proposal they assess, which should: capture your overall impression of the project proposal; highlight any particular concerns or strengths of the proposal; record any points not captured against the specific evaluation criteria.

The evaluator comments on a particular project will not be directly visible to the project applicant. However, some comments and scores could be used by the Rapporteur in order to draft the consensus report on the proposal, by summarising the comments from all three evaluators. The comments in the Rapporteur's report will be used to provide feedback to the project teams who have submitted the proposal.

Annex D: Evaluation Form Template

STEP I   Pre-proposals Evaluation

EVALUATION REPORT	
The proposal is within the scope of the call: Yes /No	
Ethical issues: The proposal contravene fundamental ethical principles: Yes/No	
Criterion 1. Coherence and pertinence of the objectives, contribution to the call topics	**Score: 0-5**
(+) Strengths **(-) Weaknesses**	
Criterion 2. Scientific quality, innovation potential (including multidisciplinarity and cross-sectorial aspects)	**Score: 0-5**
(+) Strengths **(-) Weaknesses**	
Criterion 3. Appropriateness of the research methodology, feasibility, adequacy of the budget	**Score: 0-5**
(+) Strengths **(-) Weaknesses**	
Criterion 4. Quality of the consortium, complementarity among partners, added value of the transnational cooperation	**Score: 0-5**
(+) Strengths **(-) Weaknesses**	
Criterion 5. Potential impact of projects results	**Score: 0-5**
(+) Strengths **(-) Weaknesses**	
Overall evaluation summary, including recommendations, if any, for the second step	**Final score (0-25)**