



Greening Agrifood in Social Economy



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Call for Interest for the Admission of Service Providers on Greening Agrifood in Social Economy

(„Call for Service Providers“)

GRAINS-WP5-2024-001-ext

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1. AIM OF THE CALL

This **Call for Interest for the Admission of Service Provider** (or **Call for Service Providers**) is launched in the framework of the GRAINS project that will select and provide financial support to up to 60 Social Economy SMEs (in EU Members States + Ukraine) for the implementation of greening projects in their agri-food businesses.

For the implementation of their projects, selected Social Economy SMEs will have to *contract verified service providers* financed through the grant provided to them by the GRAINS project. Based on the present call, GRAINS will select and admit service providers to create a pool from which Social Economy SMEs in agri-food can choose the most appropriate provider to support their project implementation.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON GRAINS PROJECT

GRAINS - Greening Agrifood in Social Economy, is a project funded by European Innovation Council and SMEs Executive Agency.

The GRAINS project aims at building the capacity of social economy SMEs in agrifood by providing training and workshops on sustainable practices and on how to reduce their environmental footprint, namely:

- Supporting the transition towards sustainable and environmentally friendly practices and production processes;
- Promoting the adoption of sustainable technologies and innovations;
- Building the capacity and competitiveness of social economy SMEs through knowledge transfer and skills development about sustainable practices;
- Fostering transnational cooperation, best practice sharing, and promoting sustainable practices through awareness-raising efforts.

The GRAINS project is implementing for social economy small and medium enterprises a capacity building programme focused on business needs and innovation, specific operations of agri-food supply chain, a mentorship and coaching programme, an advisory support programme to facilitate the transfer of knowledge and expertise from experts and practitioners, as well as a financial facility programme that will provide subsidies (Financial Facility Program).

The project runs between 1 October 2023 and 30 September 2025.

More information about the GRAINS project is available on the GRAINS's project [website](#).

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE CALL FOR SERVICE PROVIDERS

The present Call document sets out the requirements and rules for admission of the **service providers to form part of a pool from which SMEs selected for the GRAINS project can choose from**.

In addition to other important activities that aim to support Social Economy SMEs in agrifood, GRAINS – as mentioned above - will introduce an open call for Financing facility for green agrifood in social economy SMEs (Financial Facility Program) in the upcoming months.

The **Financial Facility Program** is a monetary support program, and aims to:

- ✓ Improving the capacity of social economy SMEs in agrifood to transition to a green business model by improving efficiency.
- ✓ Modernizing the way of working through the use of digitalisation and technology.
- ✓ Encouraging cross-sectoral cooperation and knowledge transfer between social economy SMEs, start-ups, traditional enterprises, consultancies, business support centers, and incubators to increase the adoption of green skills and the development of more sustainable products and services.
- ✓ Promoting sustainable innovation processes by social economy SMEs to increase their competitiveness and creating new market opportunities.
- ✓ Encouraging further investment by social economy SMEs in sustainable alternatives, capacity building, and knowledge transfer.

The call for the program will be open from early March 2024 for at least 2 months and will select up to 60 Agri-Food Social Economy SMEs to take part in the **Financial Facility Program**. The Program with selected Social Economy SMEs as foreseen will start during the summer of 2024. Within the project planned timeframe, selected Social Economy SMEs will have to implement their projects with the support of one or several service providers.

Social Economy SMEs selected under the Call for Proposals in the Financial Facility Program will receive an amount of max EUR 8175 of financial support to implement their projects depending on their activities.

The total amount of funding that will be provided to Social Economy SMEs is EUR 500 000.

As part of the Financial Facility Program, GRAINS partnership publishes the present **Call for Service Providers**. The aim of this Call also to map and scout service providers across Europe. The objective is to

create an European-wide database of capable suppliers who can support the green transformation of social economy SMEs. The database will be accessible to all and will be permanently stored on the beneficiary's and associated partners' websites and on the GRAINS website.

Social Economy SMEs will use the financial support granted to them via the Financial Facility Program to contract services from the service providers admitted to the pool based on the present **Call for Service Providers**. The activities for which social economy SMEs may receive financial support are:

- training (upskilling and reskilling),
- consultancy and labelling for greening their operations,
- tailored advisory services to develop local markets,
- as well as other elements necessary for greening their enterprises (eco certifications, eco packaging, digitalisation and technologies, etc.),
- as well as the additional path of coaching and mentoring on development of the green transition for social enterprises.

The participating social economy SMEs will present their needs, greening plan, and the chosen services (from the list of the service providers) that they want to contact.

With the present **Call for Service Providers** the GRAINS consortium invites interested professionals and companies to apply for admission into the pool of service providers and hence to have to possibility to be contracted by Social Economy SMEs to support their project implementation.

Note that the application for admission to the pool does not entail an automatic right or guarantee to be contracted by a selected company under the GRAINS project.

The services could be provided in English or in the service provider's language - depending on the need of the supported SME.

The aim of the call is solely to create a pool/shortlist of providers from which Social Economy SMEs can choose.

4. ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

To be admitted to the GRAINS pool of service providers, individuals or companies have to fulfil the following admission requirements:

For individual professionals:

- Have minimum 3 years of experience in greening applications for agri-food SMEs, OR
- Have minimum 3 years of experience supporting SMEs from the agri-food industry, in their green transformation process.



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- Have expertise in a minimum one of the following subjects:
 - ✓ financial tools for the green transition of Social Economy SMEs.
 - ✓ access to technology and digitalisation for the green transition of Social Economy SMEs
 - ✓ branding and green labelling
 - ✓ Clusters of Social and Ecological Innovation (CSEIs) and European Digital Innovation Hubs (EDIH)
 - ✓ eco packaging and unpacking
 - ✓ food loss and environmental food footprint
 - ✓ local markets
 - ✓ best practices for the rationalisation of synthetic substances used in agriculture
 - ✓ biodiversity and resilience
 - ✓ enhancement of local agrobiodiversity
- Be a resident in the European Union or in Ukraine
- Have an appropriate working knowledge of English (minimum B2). Knowledge of other languages of the project (Italian, German, Romanian; Ukrainian) is an advantage.

For companies and start-ups:

- Provide a service relevant and beneficial for the green transformation of agri-food businesses related to minimum one of the following subjects:
 - ✓ financial tools for the green transition of Social Economy SMEs.
 - ✓ access to technology and digitalisation for the green transition of Social Economy SMEs
 - ✓ branding and green labelling
 - ✓ Clusters of Social and Ecological Innovation (CSEIs) and European Digital Innovation Hubs (EDIH)
 - ✓ eco packaging and unpacking
 - ✓ food loss and environmental food footprint
 - ✓ best practices for the rationalisation of synthetic substances used in agriculture
 - ✓ biodiversity and resilience
 - ✓ enhancement of local agrobiodiversity
- Be registered in in the European Union or in Ukraine
- Be represented by a minimum of 1 staff member fulfilling the above-mentioned criteria for individual professionals.

Service providers are excluded from participation if:

- a) They are bankrupt or being wound up, are having their affairs administered by the courts, have entered into an arrangement with creditors, have suspended business activities, are the subject of proceedings concerning those matters, or are in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for in national legislation or regulations;
- b) They or persons having powers of representation, decision making or control over them have been convicted of an offence concerning their professional conduct by a judgement of a competent party of a Member State which has the force of res judicata;



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- c) They have been guilty of grave professional misconduct proven by any means that the contracting party can justify including by decisions of the European Investment Bank and international organisations;
- d) They are not in compliance with their obligations relating to the payment of social security contributions or the payment of taxes in accordance with the legal provisions of the country in which they are established or with those of the country of the contracting party or those of the country where the contract is to be performed;
- e) They or persons having powers of representation, decision making or control over them have been the subject of a judgement which has the force of res judicata for fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organization, money laundering or any other illegal activity, where such an illegal activity is detrimental to the Union's financial interests;
- f) They are subject to an administrative penalty for being guilty of misrepresentation in supplying the information required by the contracting party as a condition of participation in a procurement procedure or failing to supply information, or being declared to be in serious breach of their obligation under a contract covered by the budget;
- g) They have a conflict of interest in connection with a possible contract; a conflict of interest could arise in particular as a result of economic interests, political or national affinities, family or emotional ties or any other relevant connection or shared interest

5. APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Service providers are invited to apply to this Call by submitting their application through [this link](#), filling in all required fields.

- Applications need to be filled and submitted in English.
- Applicants need to provide their CV or a minimum of one CV of a staff member of the company providing the service.
- Applicants (individuals or companies) can optionally provide further supporting documentation to showcase or justify their expertise, e.g. a service portfolio.
- After submission, applicants who have been verified will receive an e-mail confirming their admission to the pool.

6. DEADLINE AND EVALUATION

The Call for Service Providers is open until 29 February 2024 (extended deadline) via the same [link](#) indicated above already.

Based on the received applications, GRAINS partnership selects the eligible service providers by 22 March 2024 and notify by email the individuals and organisations about their eligibility.

The initial pool of the service providers will be created and published by 29 March 2024.

Should you have any questions, please contact us on grainsproject@diesis.coop.

Brussels, 08.02.2024