

HORIZON-CL6-2025-02-FARM2FORK-05-two-stage: Developing agroecology living labs and lighthouses for climate action under the Food and Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture (FNSSA) partnership

Call: Cluster 6 Call 02 - two stage	
Specific conditions	
<i>Expected EU contribution per project</i>	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 6.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
<i>Indicative budget</i>	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 12.00 million.
<i>Type of Action</i>	Research and Innovation Actions
<i>Eligibility conditions</i>	<p>The conditions are described in General Annex B. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>The Joint Research Centre (JRC) may participate as member of the consortium selected for funding.</p> <p>The following additional eligibility criteria apply: The proposals must apply the multi-actor approach. See definition of the multi-actor approach in the introduction to this work programme part.</p> <p>The following additional eligibility criteria apply: The following additional eligibility criteria apply: due to the specific challenge of this topic, in addition to the minimum number of participants set out in the General Annexes, consortia must include at least three independent legal entities established in an African Union member state*. The places of</p>

	<p>establishment of at least two of these legal entities must be in the same region, as defined by the African Union: see https://au.int/en/member_states/countryprofiles2.</p> <p>International organisations with headquarters in a Member State or Associated Country are exceptionally eligible for funding.</p> <p>Due to the scope of this topic, legal entities established in all African Union member states* are exceptionally eligible for Union funding. * "African Union member states" includes countries whose membership has been temporarily suspended.</p>
<i>Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements</i>	<p>The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply:</p> <p>Eligible costs will take the form of a lump sum as defined in the Decision of 7 July 2021 authorising the use of lump sum contributions under the Horizon Europe Programme – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2021-2027) – and in actions under the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2021-2025) ¹⁴⁵.</p> <p>Beneficiaries may provide financial support to third parties (FSTP). The support to third parties can only be provided in the form of grants. The maximum amount to be granted to each third party is EUR 60 000.</p>

Expected Outcome: A successful proposal should support the European Green Deal priorities, contribute to the African Union-EU High Level Policy Dialogue on Science, Technology and Innovation and to the respective R&I partnerships on Food and Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture (FNSSA) and on Climate Change and Sustainable Energy. Proposals should contribute to the climate objectives of the African Union and the EU, and to the commitments of the Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework. Projects will therefore contribute to the expected impacts of this Destination by developing innovative tools and approaches to improve the resilience, adaptation to climate change and sustainability of agriculture and food systems in Africa.

Project results are expected to contribute to all the following expected outcomes:

- the availability, accessibility and adoption by farmers, advisors and policymakers of fair and inclusive approaches and strategies that improve agricultural productivity and sustainability in Africa, while addressing climate challenges is accelerated, optimising the use of ecological processes with co-benefits for biodiversity;

¹⁴⁵ This [decision](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf) is available on the Funding and Tenders Portal, in the reference documents section for Horizon Europe, under 'Simplified costs decisions' or through this link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ls-decision_he_en.pdf

- the coordination and experience sharing among researchers and agricultural actors in Africa is strengthened, in view of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and in line with the FNSSA roadmap¹⁴⁶;
- agri-food stakeholders benefit from enhanced climatic, environmental and socio-economic performance of African agroecological farming practices.

Scope: Agroecology is a holistic approach that relies on and optimises the use of ecological processes to support agricultural production. By working more with nature and ecosystem services, it has the potential to increase farms' circularity, diversification and autonomy, address climate challenges while preserving and enhancing biodiversity, and drive a full transformation of farming systems and agricultural value chains, from input substitution and beyond. Agroecological farming systems therefore have great potential to enhance the sustainability performance of agriculture and agricultural value chains that contribute to the objectives of the EU Green deal for agriculture and to the FNSSA partnership.

Living labs under this topic are intended as open innovation ecosystems in real-life sites using iterative feedback processes throughout a lifecycle approach of an innovation to create inclusive and sustainable impact.

While living labs are collaborative initiatives to co-create knowledge and innovations, lighthouses are sites for demonstration of exemplary and replicable solutions, training, peer-to-peer learning, and communications related to promoting agroecological approaches.

Proposals should:

- set up living labs and light houses as places for testing and demonstrating agroecological approaches in different pedoclimatic conditions in Africa;
- carry out participatory and transdisciplinary research and innovation activities in living labs with agricultural actors (e.g. researchers, farmers, advisors, policymakers), including on socio-economic aspects to support sustainability transitions and upscaling, to seek practical agroecological solutions to the climatic and biodiversity challenges/opportunities identified;
- identify sites that demonstrate high performance in terms of their actions and results on agroecology and that may be converted into lighthouses;
- strengthen interactions between existing living and new labs, light houses and like-minded arrangements on agroecology to share lessons and facilitate science policy interfaces using where relevant existing network arrangements, such as those under the Horizon Europe CEA-First project.

¹⁴⁶ https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/strategy/strategy-2020-2024/europe-world/international-cooperation/regional-dialogues-and-international-organisations/eu-africa-cooperation/partnership-food-and-nutrition-security-and-sustainable-agriculture-fnssa_en

Proposals should contribute to the implementation of the short- and medium-term actions of the joint AU-EU Innovation Agenda, particularly in the area of Green (notably actions (4) and (5) among short-term actions and (1) and (3) for medium-term actions), and aim to translate R&I efforts into tangible business, products, services, development and quality employment opportunities and social economy enterprises in Africa and Europe. Proposals should be in line with the conclusions of the 2023 AU-EU Agriculture Ministerial Conference¹⁴⁷ and support the African Free Trade Area.

Proposals should contribute to the implementation of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) adopted R&I roadmaps¹⁴⁸ pertaining to climate change, particularly in the areas impact of water scarcity and drought in rural areas, sustainable agriculture production and biodiversity in changing climate.

Proposals should build on the experience gained with relevant former and on-going FNSSA projects on agroecological approaches under Horizon 2020 and the Horizon Europe Work Programmes, as well as with activities of the DeSIRA¹⁴⁹ initiative part of the EU International Partnerships. At the same time, proposals should create synergies with any relevant activities carried out under the European Partnership “Agroecology” (‘Accelerating farming systems transition – agroecology living labs and research infrastructures’) and targeted EU-Africa cooperation activities under the EU Mission “A soil deal for Europe”. Proposals should include a dedicated task and appropriate resources to create those synergies. To leverage opportunities for furthering impact and outreach, proposals should create synergies with the project resulting from the call “HORIZON-CL6-2025-02-FARM2FORK-16: Developing a joint AU-EU Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation System (AKIS) supporting the Food and Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture (FNSSA) partnership”.

Proposals should adopt an inclusive approach that respects and integrates local knowledge and practices alongside technological and scientific expertise, where indigenous insights are enriched by innovative approaches and new technologies through mutual learning.

Proposals must implement the ‘multi-actor approach’ to ensure the adequate involvement of the farming sector, civils society and relevant policy actors.

Participation of Mediterranean countries other than from EU and AU is encouraged.

The possible contribution of the JRC could involve exploring possible pathways for a sustainable transition of agriculture and food systems, defining scenarios for the agro-ecological transition, assessing the impacts of such transition, engaging with stakeholders, disseminating results notably to policymakers and through cooperation with the EC Knowledge Centre for Global Food and Nutrition Security.

¹⁴⁷ https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/events/5th-african-union-au-european-union-eu-agriculture-ministerial-conference-2023-06-30_en

¹⁴⁸ <https://ufmsecretariat.org/ministerial-conference-research-innovation-2022/>

¹⁴⁹ https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/policies/programming/programmes/desira-development-smart-innovation-through-research-agriculture_en

Proposals should ensure that gender dimension and social categories (e.g. disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnic and/or cultural origins, sexual orientation) and their intersections, are duly considered.

Proposals may involve financial support to third parties to researchers, farmers, advisors and other multidisciplinary actors contributing to the setting up of living labs and/or lighthouses. A maximum 30% of EU funding should be allocated to this purpose. The provision of training (including technical guidelines and ad-hoc materials) and support services to farmers may be considered as a criterion to grant financial support to third parties.

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