

Consumer Insights Programme Terms and Conditions

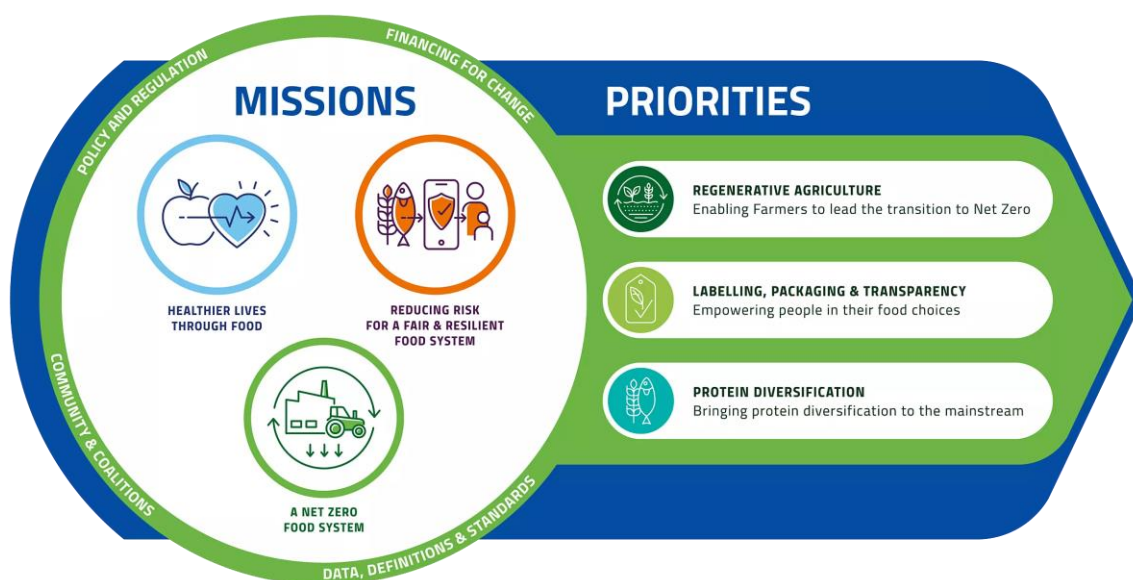
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1. Introduction

EIT Food is the world's largest food innovation community, creating connections right across the food system. Supported by the European Union (EU), we invest in projects, organisations, and individuals which share our goals for a healthy and sustainable food system.

We have built a unique not-for-profit business to carry out transformative programmes in skills, education, entrepreneurship, start-up investment and communications. We deliver these programmes in partnership with our members to create a culture and build a community which sees the long-term value in the food innovation we fund.



EIT Food's Missions respond to major societal challenges within the food system. The alignment of our chosen challenges towards United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and EU policy is detailed in our main funding [strategy document](#) agreed with EIT (European Institute of Innovation & Technology). For more about our Missions-led approach please visit [our website](#).

Powered by EIT Food, the **Consumer Observatory** brings together research and consumer insights organisations from across the food system to curate and produce bespoke research, up-to-date analysis, and unique insights from across the agrifood community. It aims to maximise the impact of consumer insights on agrifood topics, delivering greater knowledge, strategy, and guidance to agrifood stakeholders, educators, policymakers, and businesses – helping to bring about change in the agrifood system that is well-informed and consumer-focussed.

2. Purpose and Scope

Focus Area

The Consumer Insights Programme is designed to help early-stage agrifood innovators prepare for successful market entry by refining their product and communication through consumer insight.

The programme is aimed at companies with solutions that are nearly market-ready or newly launched, but not yet generating significant revenue. It is structured as a recurring programme with multiple submission windows throughout the year. Each edition will focus on a different consumer-related theme to ensure ongoing relevance across diverse innovation areas.

The first edition of the programme focuses on transparency in the food system, a growing area of consumer concern. Future editions will explore different topics.

What the Programme Offers

The Consumer Insights Programme supports innovative companies that seek a better understanding of the consumer perceptions before launching a new innovation to the market by offering :

- Expert-led workshops focused on market trends, product positioning, and consumer communication
- Access to tailored insights from EIT Food's Consumer Observatory
- Concept development support to refine your solution and messaging
- Qualitative consumer testing with real individuals across Europe, conducted via EIT Food's established community of engaged citizens.
- Individualised feedback and reporting to support strategic decisions

Benefits for Participants and Outcomes

Through those expert-led workshops, curated market insights, and bespoke consumer testing, companies will:

- Understand how their innovation aligns with consumer expectations, particularly around the edition's theme
- Gain clarity on perceived strengths, weaknesses, and uniqueness
- Test their messaging and value proposition with real consumers
- Use insight to refine their offer, reduce launch risk, and build credibility with stakeholders

Each participant receives a customised insights report and support in identifying practical next steps for implementation.

Details of the programme, application process and eligibility are below.

3. Programme outline

Overview

Category	Details
Purpose	Help early-stage agrifood innovations refine their product and communication based on real consumer insights before market launch.
Unique Value Proposition	- Bespoke consumer testing - Tailored category insights and concept development support
Thematic Focus	Edition 1: Transparency in the food system (Future editions will focus on other consumer-relevant themes)
Who Should Apply	Start-ups or SMEs with innovations launching (within 6–12 months) Seeking to align with consumer needs and strengthen market readiness
Eligibility Criteria	- Registered in the EU or Horizon Europe Associated Countries - Solution aligns with EIT Food's focus areas and missions - Application submitted in English
Selection Criteria	- Relevance to transparency - Potential for positive consumer and stakeholder impact - Market traction - Readiness to apply insights
Programme Format	- Expert-led online workshops - Insights report from EIT Food's Consumer Observatory - Concept writing support - Consumer feedback session
Time Commitment	Approx. 20 hours total over 4–6 weeks
Deliverables	Final summary of how insights will be applied to product, messaging, or market strategy
Timeline (Edition 1)	- Applications: April 25 – May 31st - Programme: June–July 2025 - Final Deliverable: by November 31
Number of Participants	Up to 5 selected companies per edition
Cost	Fully funded by EIT Food (no participation fee)

Programme Steps

- **Insights Workshop** : This workshop serves as the official kick-off. Participants will share what they already know about their market, product category, or target consumer. The session also helps identify key knowledge gaps and hypotheses to be tested through the programme. It provides an opportunity to connect with other start-ups working on similar challenges.
- **Category Insights Report** : Each participant will receive a tailored report drawn from EIT Food's Insights Hub. This report will include existing consumer research relevant to your category, offering valuable context for interpreting your product's positioning within the broader market landscape.

- **Trend Workshop** : A focused session exploring current consumer perceptions and expectations around **transparency in the food system**. Participants will learn about key trends and how their innovation aligns with consumer priorities on trust and openness.
- **Concept Writing Workshop** : Participants will work with experts to develop a clear and consumer-centric product concept. The concept should define the consumer problem being solved, your solution's unique promise, and the evidence that supports it, serving as the foundation for consumer testing.
- **Bespoke Qualitative Concept Test** : Each participant's concept will be tested with real consumers through EIT Food's **Citizen Participation Forum (CPF)**. The study gathers perceptions on both the general product category and the specific concept submitted. Participants will receive a **confidential, personalised report** combining general insights with targeted feedback to inform product, positioning, or communication refinement.

4. Eligibility

Consumer Insights Programme is open to the applicants who meet the following eligibility criteria:

Organisation Eligibility	Each implementing participant must :
	- Be registered in a Member State of the European Union or a Horizon Europe Associated Country - Have an innovative solution in agrifood OR a product/service from another sector applicable to EIT Food's focus areas (Sustainable Agriculture, Sustainable Aquaculture, Alternative Proteins, Circular Food Systems, Digital Traceability, Targeted Nutrition) and contributing to EIT Food Mission/s (https://www.eitfood.eu/missions). - Be in the final development stages or recently launched, but not yet generating significant revenue - Be willing to share relevant product development and market strategy information with the programme team
Application Eligibility	To be eligible, applications must :
	- Be submitted in English and fully completed - If not already launched, demonstrate readiness to launch the proposed product or solution within the next 6–12 months - Demonstrate how their product, service, or innovation contributes to transparency in the food system, whether through product features, information sharing, processes, or consumer engagement¹

¹ This transparency requirement applies to the current edition of the programme. Future editions may focus on other consumer-relevant themes.

	- Include a clear rationale for how the applicant will engage with and benefit from consumer insights
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Please see Annex 1 for additional eligibility restrictions.

5. Application

Interested entities are invited to apply via the registration form available on the programme's webpage.

Please find the link to the webpage and application form [here](#).

The selection panel continuously evaluates applications according to the selection criteria (see [6. Evaluation and Selection](#)). If the selection panel lacks information required to evaluate some applications, the candidates who submitted those applications may be asked for additional information or an online interview to determine the final selection. EIT Food informs all applicants about the selection results and invites successful applicants to join the programme.

By submitting your entry, you grant EIT Food the right to share your information with the EIT, and to publicise your success story and impact summary. Note, evidence of your commercial success will not be made public but would be provided to EIT through the confidential reporting process.

By submitting the requested information, Participants represent and warrant that they have all rights, title and/or interest in it and that it is accurate and complete and that by submitting their entry to the Consumer Insights Programme, they are not and will not be likely to be violating any contract or third-party rights, including any patents, copyright, trade secret, proprietary or confidential information, trademark, publicity or privacy right.

6. Evaluation and Selection

EIT Food will evaluate each proposal based on the criteria below on its own merits. You must provide sufficient information and evidence to support claims or statements made in your application.

The applicants who do not meet all eligibility criteria (see [4. Eligibility](#)) will be automatically rejected.

Applications are reviewed on a rolling basis, and the application window will remain open until we reach the target number of participants. We encourage interested companies to apply as early as possible, as the selection process is ongoing and the application stage will close once capacity is reached. The most relevant applicants will be invited to join the programme. The final number of applicants invited to the programme will be determined by EIT Food in consultation with the panel of evaluators with a maximum of 5 companies.

The answers provided in the application form submitted by the applicants will be evaluated according to the following selection criteria :

Criteria
The proposed solution addresses a significant challenge related to transparency in the food supply chain , and transparency is clearly integrated into the product's features, positioning, or values.
Improving transparency for the proposed solution has the potential to benefit both consumers (directly) and stakeholders. <i>This consumer benefit must be explained clearly in the application.</i>
The product is close to market or commercially active, with evidence of market traction, a defined go-to-market plan, or unique positioning that differentiates it from alternatives.
The applicant clearly articulates what they want to learn from consumer testing and how they plan to apply insights gained from the programme.

ALL DECISIONS OF THE EVALUATION PANEL WILL BE FINAL AND BINDING ON ALL MATTERS RELATING TO THIS PROGRAMME.

The evaluation panel will review all entries, and cross check against publicly available information.

After application evaluation, all companies are informed about the selection results. Companies selected are asked to sign a participation agreement confirming their commitment to the programme.

7. Deliverable

To help evaluate the programme's impact and support participants in applying the insights they gain, selected organisations will be asked to complete two key deliverables.

At the beginning of the programme, each participating organisation will be asked to complete a short baseline survey.

At the end of the programme, each selected organisation will submit an Impact Summary outlining how the insights gathered throughout the programme will be applied. This summary will provide a key input for EIT Food's evaluation and learning process. A simple reporting template will be provided during the final phase of the programme.

8. Commitment

Companies selected to join Consumer Insights Programme will be asked to sign a participation agreement confirming their commitment to the programme and in the in-kind nature of the support which will be provided (The programme does not include financial support).

Selected companies should be able to choose at least one relevant English-speaking team member (i.e. founder, co-founder, sales manager, or business developer) to participate in the group workshops.

A detailed programme schedule will be presented to the selected startups shortly after the announcement of the selection results.

9. Important Dates (tentative)

Online applications & continuous selection	April, 25 – May, 30
Successful companies invited to the programme	From May, 15
Consumer Insights Programme	June / July.
<i>The exact dates of the workshops will be determined later.</i>	
Submission of the final deliverable	by November, 31

Some dates may change, and the organizers will inform accordingly by emailing programme participants directly.

10. IP rights and confidentiality

The applications submitted to EIT Food for Consumer Insights program are handled confidentially. Everybody that reads the applications during the review process is bound by confidentiality agreements.

Applicants retain full and exclusive ownership of their intellectual property rights. The organisers and their authorised representatives in the program undertake to ensure the confidentiality of the ideas and projects presented and developed throughout the competition.

11. Acceptance of “Terms & Conditions”

- a. By submitting an entry to the “Consumer Insights Programme”, you agree to be bound by the following legal terms governing the Programme managed by EIT Food.
- b. Under all and any circumstances, EIT Food have the right to change the set-up of the Programme or to extend or terminate the Programme before the end of the term of the Programme. Furthermore, EIT Food in all and any circumstances has the right to change any provisions of these Terms & Conditions, and any other terms, policy or guideline governing your use of the website,

at any time in its sole discretion. Such changes will be effective upon posting such revisions on the website. In case of major change, the applicants will be informed by email. You should frequently review these Terms & Conditions and any other applicable rules, policies or guidelines on the Programme webpage.

- c. You agree that these terms and the relationship between you and EIT Food shall be governed by the laws of Belgium and that any disputes arising out of your participation in the Programme shall be submitted to the jurisdiction of the Court of Leuven.

12. Personal Data Processing

EIT Food will collect and process personal data submitted by participants for the purpose of managing and evaluating the Consumer Insights Programme. Personal data will be handled confidentially and in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679. Participants have the right to access, rectify, and request the deletion of their personal data by contacting.

13. Contact details

In case of any questions or inquiries, please contact Consumer Insights Programme Voucher Leads: consumerinsights@eitfood.eu

ANNEX 1 – ELIGIBILITY

Please Note:

1. According to EU policies and measures, Russian and Belarus entities will not be authorised to participate in any new grant under the EU Research and Innovation programmes. This ban applies not only to their potential participation as beneficiaries, but to their potential participation in any kind of role: beneficiaries, linked third parties/affiliated entities, subcontractors, in-kind contributors, international partners/associated partners, and third parties receiving financial support. Find the full statement from the European Commission [here](#). Other countries so designated by the EU will also be likewise ineligible for funding.
2. Pursuant to Article 2 (2) of the Decision 2022/2506 of 15 December 2022 on measures for the protection of the Union budget against breaches of the principles of the rule of law in Hungary *where the Commission implements the Union budget in direct or indirect management pursuant to of Article 62(1) points (a) and (c), of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046, no legal commitments shall be entered into with any public interest trust established on the basis of the Hungarian Act IX of 2021 or any entity maintained by such a public interest trust*. This prohibition applies to financial support to third parties (sub-grants and prizes), hence the proposal of any entity or group of entities where a Participant is included in the list of public interest trusts shall be considered as not eligible. Find the full statement from the European Commission [here](#).