

Request for Proposals

Support for the launch, management and monitoring of the EIT Food Agrifood Investors Network and Connecta2Invest platform

1. Overview of EIT Food

EIT Food is Europe's leading food innovation initiative, working to make the food system more sustainable, healthy and trusted. EIT Food is a Knowledge and Innovation Community supported by the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT), a body of the European Union. EIT Food brings together partners from industry, research, education, startups and public institutions to accelerate innovation and entrepreneurship across the agrifood sector.

2. Scope of work

2.1 Background and objective

EIT Food intends to appoint a contractor (single-person company or freelancer) to support the launch, management and monitoring of the EIT Food Agrifood Investors Network, including the operational management and further development of the Connecta2Invest digital platform. The assignment aims to strengthen EIT Food's capacity to connect high-potential agrifoodtech startups with relevant investors across Europe and build a structured investor community aligned with EIT Food's entrepreneurship and access-to-finance activities.

2.2 Detailed work scope

- **Database Building & Market Intelligence:** Update and further build a comprehensive database of active EU early-stage agrifoodtech investors. Map critical fund metrics including fund size, investment windows, target ticket sizes, and sector focus.
- **Project methodology, governance and monitoring:** propose and implement a structured methodology to launch, manage and monitor the EIT Food Agrifood Investors Network, including activity planning, progress tracking, KPI monitoring, risk identification and reporting.
- **Network Formalization & Value Prop:** Roll out a compelling investor value proposition based on direct community access, platform deal-flow searches, exclusive F2F matchmaking, and dedicated deal-flow sessions with the EIT Food investment team. Draft and formalize legal documentation for the investor network.
- **Business Development Coordination & Investor Onboarding:** Coordinate business development efforts to identify, prioritise and approach target investors, present the opportunity to join the EIT Food Agrifood Investors Network, manage engagement and support discussions through to the completion of collaboration agreements.
- **Platform and community management:** Lead the day-to-day operations of the Connecta2Invest platform and related investor/startup community, including member vetting, onboarding workflows, content refresh cycles and proactive engagement.
- **CRM administration and reporting:** Maintain accurate investor and startup data, build and manage segmented lists, generate regular reports and support email campaigns or other communication actions targeting platform users.

- **Startup relationship management:** Act as a contact point for fundraising startups, identify high-potential ventures, support the optimisation of startup profiles and handle incoming platform-related enquiries.
- **Investor relationship management:** Identify, engage and onboard relevant investors across the European agrifoodtech ecosystem, including venture capital funds, corporate venture arms, impact investors, family offices and other relevant capital providers.
- **Investor-startup matchmaking:** Facilitate targeted introductions between fundraising startups and relevant investors by assessing investment criteria, portfolio fit, sector focus, stage readiness and funding needs.
- **Event curation and pitch theme strategy:** Support the design and delivery of online and in-person investor/startup events, including thematic pitch sessions, investor days and targeted matchmaking activities across Europe.
- **Content and communications:** In collaboration with EIT Food's Communication team, prepare relevant content for startups and investors, including newsletters, announcements, investor briefings, startup highlights and other communication materials supporting the network.
- **Entrepreneurship Programme Alignment:** Build a strong bridge with EIT Food's Entrepreneurship Programmes to ensure that the investor network value proposition complements the startup value proposition during and after programme participation. Together with the EP team, identify and implement relevant touchpoints, referral pathways and investor-readiness activities across the startup journey.

2.3 Expected deliverables

- Operational launch and management plan for the EIT Food Agrifood Investors Network and Connecta2Invest platform.
- Updated and segmented investor and startup databases, with agreed reporting structure.
- Regular activity reports covering platform usage, investor engagement, startup onboarding, matchmaking activity, events and key risks or issues.
- Investor engagement pipeline, including target investors, outreach status, onboarding progress and next actions.
- Event concepts, agendas and implementation support for investor/startup events, including online and hybrid formats.
- Content outputs such as newsletters, investor briefings, startup profiles and other communication materials agreed with EIT Food (in collaboration with EIT Food Communication team).

2.4 Duration, workload and working arrangements

The initial assignment will have a duration of one year, with the possibility for EIT Food to renew the assignment for one additional year, subject to performance, budget availability and EIT Food's internal approval processes. The expected workload is 32 hours per week. The contractor must be available during EIT Food office hours, normally from 09:00 to 17:00 CET/CEST, to enable regular collaboration with EIT Food teams and external stakeholders.

The services will be delivered in a hybrid format, combining remote work with regular physical presence at one of EIT Food's offices, preferably at our head office in Leuven, Belgium where the investment team is located.

3. Required qualifications and experience

- Proven experience in managing digital platforms, online communities, CRM systems or stakeholder engagement tools.
- Strong understanding of startup fundraising, venture building, investor relations, deal-flow generation or innovation ecosystem development.
- Relevant experience in similar assignments or tasks, either as a contractor, consultant or employee.
- Established network in the agrifoodtech sector, preferably including investors, startups, corporates, accelerators, incubators and ecosystem organisations.
- Ability to design and implement a practical methodology for launching, managing and monitoring an investor network and digital matchmaking platform.
- Excellent written and spoken English. Knowledge of other EU languages will be considered an asset.
- Previous experience in an EIT Knowledge and Innovation Community, EU-funded environment, European innovation programme or comparable ecosystem will be considered a plus.
- Good understanding of the EU innovation, entrepreneurship and investment environment will be considered a plus.
- Capacity to work autonomously while coordinating closely with EIT Food teams and external stakeholders.
- Evidence of sufficient economic and financial capacity to perform the assignment. EIT Food reserves the right to request supporting financial information from tenderers.

4. Proposal process

4.1 Participation

Participation in this proposal procedure is open to all eligible economic operators. This procurement is conducted as a public tender in accordance with EIT Food procurement procedures. EIT Food may reject proposals that do not comply with the requirements set out in this Request for Proposals.

4.2 Eligibility and Exclusion Criteria

Tenderers must:

- demonstrate that they have the status of freelancer or single-person company;
- tenderers that are bankrupt, insolvent, or subject to winding-up proceedings at the time of publication of the RFP, during the RFP process, or within the six months preceding its publication;
- comply with all applicable laws and regulations, including employment, tax, social security and data protection laws;

- possess the technical and professional capacity required to perform the assignment.

The following tenderers may be excluded from the procedure:

- tenderers that are bankrupt, insolvent or subject to winding-up proceedings at the time of publication of the RFP, after publication and 6 months previous publication;
- tenderers that have been convicted of fraud, corruption, money laundering or other offences affecting the financial interests of the European Union;
- tenderers that have failed to comply with their tax or social security obligations;
- tenderers that have provided false declarations or misleading information during the procurement procedure;
- tenderers affected by a conflict of interest that cannot be effectively remedied.

Tenderers shall confirm compliance with the above requirements by submitting the Declaration of Honour attached as Annex 2.

4.3 Submission of proposal

Proposals must be submitted in English by email to the contact person indicated by EIT Food.

Contact name: for the attention of Mr Benoit Buntinx

E-mail: benoit.buntinx@eitfood.eu

The proposal should be concise, clear and complete, and should include the technical response, the financial offer and all supporting documents requested below. The financial offer must be expressed in euros, with VAT indicated separately where applicable.

- Identification and short presentation of the tenderer.
- CV/profile of the contractor.
- Description of relevant past experience in similar assignments, including platform/community management, investor relations, startup support, matchmaking and event delivery.
- Description of the tenderer's network in the agrifoodtech sector, with particular attention to investors and startup-support ecosystems.
- Proposed methodology to launch, manage and monitor the EIT Food Agrifood Investors Network and the Connecta2Invest platform.
- Financial offer, including hourly fee in euros, VAT excluded and VAT indicated separately where relevant.
- Confirmation of availability, proposed starting date and ability to commit 32 hours per week with full availability during office hours.
- Confirmation of absence of conflict of interest and acceptance of the applicable EIT Food contractual terms.
- Completed and signed Declaration of Honour (Annex 2).
- Evidence of legal registration of the tenderer (or equivalent corporate registration document).

4.4 Indicative timetable

Step	Indicative date
Sending out RFP invitations / publication	Thursday 22nd October
Deadline for clarification requests	Friday 30th October
Deadline for submitting proposals	Friday 6th November
Intended date of notification of award	Tuesday 17th November
Intended date of contract signature	Friday 27th November
Indicative starting date	Tuesday 1st December

5. Evaluation of proposals

The quality of each proposal will be evaluated in accordance with the award criteria below. EIT Food will assess proposals based on best value for money, combining technical quality, relevant experience, availability and financial offer.

Criterion	Maximum score
Hourly fee / financial offer. The lowest compliant hourly fee will receive the highest score; other offers may be scored proportionally.	30
CV/profile of the proposed contractor, including relevant skills, seniority, communication ability and fit with the assignment.	20
Experience in similar assignments or tasks, either as contractor, consultant or employee.	15
Network in the agrifoodtech sector, especially with investors, startup-support organisations and relevant European ecosystem stakeholders.	15
Quality, clarity and practicality of the proposed methodology to launch, manage and monitor the EIT Food Agrifood Investors Network and Connecta2Invest platform.	10
Availability, starting date, weekly office presence and willingness to travel within the EU when required.	10
Total	100

The results of the award procedure will be communicated in writing (via e-mail) to the successful and unsuccessful tenderers.

6. Standard procedural clauses

6.1 Validity of the proposals

Tenderers are bound by their proposals for 90 days after the deadline for submitting proposals or until they have been notified of non-award. The selected tenderer must maintain its proposal for a further 60 days to close the contract.

6.2 Requests for additional information or clarification

All requests for additional information or clarification must be submitted in writing by email to the contact person indicated by EIT Food and before the clarification deadline. EIT Food has no obligation to provide clarification after the deadline.

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E-mail: benoit.buntinx@eitfood.eu

6.3 Costs for preparing proposals

No costs incurred by tenderers in preparing and submitting proposals are reimbursable. All such costs must be borne by the tenderers.

6.4 Clarification and negotiation

After submission, proposals will be checked against the formal requirements of this RFP. Where information or documentation appears incomplete or requires clarification, EIT Food may request the tenderer to clarify, supplement or complete the relevant information within an appropriate timeframe. EIT Food reserves the right to negotiate the technical and financial elements of the proposals with compliant tenderers, ensuring equal and fair treatment.

6.5 Signature of contract

Please refer to Annex 1 for the template contract that shall apply to this procedure. Any changes desired by the tenderer in the provisions contained in the body of this Service Agreement must be communicated to EIT Food as part of the proposal of such tenderer. Any such changes will be considered as part of the evaluation of the proposal of each tenderer.

Within 5 days of receipt of the contract from EIT Food, the winning tenderer shall sign and date the contract and return it to EIT Food. Upon receipt, EIT Food shall countersign and return one signed copy of the contract to the winning tenderer.

6.6 Ethics, conflict of interest and audit requirements

EIT Food reserves the right to suspend or cancel the procedure where substantial errors, irregularities, fraud or conflict of interest are identified. The selected supplier shall take all measures to prevent any situation where the impartial and objective implementation of the contract is compromised. The supplier must immediately inform EIT Food if any potential conflict of interest arises during the procedure or implementation of the assignment. As EIT Food receives EU funding, the selected supplier may be required to provide information and documentation needed for audits, checks or controls by EIT Food, the EIT, the European Commission, the European Court of Auditors, OLAF or other competent bodies.

7. Annexes

- Annex 1: Contract template.
- Annex 2: Declaration of Honour.