



Guideline for Applicants (Expression of Interest)

**“Establishing the link between food
processing, human health, and
sustainable food systems” –
Policy Implementation Network**



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General Information

Submission deadline: **5th of February 2026 (14.00 CET)**

Link to call text: [Knowledge Hub call page](#)

Link to submission system: [MyZonMw](#)

Contact Joint Call secretariat:

MASAF (Italy) – for questions regarding the content and scope of the call – Ancy Kollamparambil (asmathew.kollamparambil.ext@masaf.gov.it)

ZonMw (Netherlands) – for technical questions related to the submission system – Bernadette Conrads and Larissa van der Bent (HDHLprojects@zonmw.nl) or reach out to the Servicedesk of ZonMw (servicedesk@zonmw.nl)

Disclaimer

Funded by the European Union under grant agreement No 101188351. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the granting authority. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.



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1. Background

Healthy Diet, Healthy Life (HDHL) aims to establish a network to provide recommendations for policy and practice on the link between food processing and sustainable food systems. This Knowledge Hub will bring together leading researchers from different disciplines – including food science, nutrition, public health, behavioural science, environmental science, and economics – to develop a shared knowledge base and provide guidance for policy, research, and innovation.

Healthy Diet, Healthy Life (HDHL) is a European Research and Innovation initiative and brings together national funding organisations committed to improving public health through better diets and nutrition, while promoting sustainable food systems. The Coordination and Support Action (CSA) HDHL Food4Health falls under the umbrella of HDHL and is funded by the European Union under Horizon Europe (Grant Agreement No. 101188351).

The Knowledge Hub will be implemented in a two-step procedure. Following the submission of the Expression of Interest (Eoi) (step one) and the national eligibility check the suggested members of the network will be selected. The successful researchers and research groups will be invited to a networking and co-creation meeting. The aim of the meeting is to elect a project coordinator, start building the network, and start developing a proposal idea. After this meeting, the selected partners of the network will finalise the full proposal (step two).

Details on the first step of the procedure are listed below.

2. Registration

Researchers who intend to submit an Expression of Interest must register at the ZonMw platform ([My ZonMw](#)) in order to be able to submit an application. There is a [My ZonMw manual for applicants](#) available to support you in registering as a new user, applying for a grant, and submitting your application.

3. Expression of Interest procedure

The Expression of Interest should express the willingness and ability of the applicant(s) to join the Knowledge Hub network. Interested researchers or research groups have to submit an Expression of Interest before **5th of February 2026 14.00 CET**. In addition, applicants should state the following:

- The expertise of the researcher or research group,
- The relevant ongoing projects and in-kind contributions,
- The planned activities in the network,
- The motivation for joining the network,
- The contribution to Early Career Scientist involvement and stakeholder engagement.

Call deadlines are final and will be strictly enforced. The submission system will not allow submissions after call deadline. Please take into account that the online data entry may be overloaded by the day of the deadline. It is therefore recommended to upload all the required materials in due time.

4. Submission Expression of Interest

The Expression of Interest application can be submitted by a single researcher or by a research group. A research group will be represented by one group leader responsible to submit the Expression of Interest application. Valid members are only researchers and research groups that have the formal support of their respective research organisations and/or institutions.

4.1 Part A – General project details

The first part will consist of general information of the applicant(s).

- Main applicant

- Name (first name, last name, initials, title)
 - Phone number
 - Email address
 - Gender
 - Position
- Research organisation
 - Organisation
 - Address
 - Department
- Administrative representative
 - Name (first name, last name, initials, title)
 - Email address
 - Gender
 - Organisation
 - Address
- Extra project members (in case of applying on behalf of a research group)
 - Name (first name, last name, initials, title)
 - Gender
 - Email address
 - Role in the project
 - Organisation
 - Department

4.2 Part B – Expression of Interest Form

Summary of motivation

1. What is your or your research group's main area of expertise? Name the main discipline. (max. 1.000 characters)
2. Please specify no more than five key words for the project.

Relevance

3. Provide details of the activities and ongoing projects that you or your research group can contribute to within the Food Processing Policy Implementation Network. (max. 3.000 characters)

Motivation and objective

4. Please provide a statement about your motivation to participate in the network and how you expect to benefit from participation in the Food Processing Policy Implementation Network. (max. 3.000 characters)

Approach and contribution

5. Please explain how you or your research group can contribute to the Food Processing Implementation Network, and the added value of the proposed contribution. Please give also a brief overview of your intended activities within the network. (max 3.000 characters)

Expertise and experience

6. Please describe your or your research group's expertise and scientific excellence in the field of food processing related to the scope of the call. Describe any previous activities and products as well as any relevant knowledge or skills of the project group or individual (if applicable also the link to policy, society and other stakeholders). (max 3.000 characters)

Publications

7. Please list your or your research group's 10 most recent and relevant publications (within the last 5 years) to support your application. (max 3.000 characters)

Capacity

8. Please describe your or your research group's capacities (infrastructures, databases, etc.) relevant to the Network. (max 3.000 characters)

4.3 Part C – Annexes and statement application

- Curriculum Vitae (CV) main applicant and co-applicants
- Letter of Expression of interest
- Statement applicant
 - o I have completed this form
 - o I agree that ZonMw will process my application and if applicable will make my data visible to committee members, reviewers and other parties for the purpose of assessing my application.

5. National regulations

The national regulations and the details of the contact points can be found in Annex 1 of this document.

Applicants must check the national regulations of their country and contact their national contact points to discuss their eligibility prior to submitting the Expression of Interest.

Annex I – Contact points and national regulations

Funding organisations

Germany

Country	Germany
Funding organisation	Bundesanstalt für Landwirtschaft und Ernährung on behalf of Bundesministerium für Landwirtschaft, Ernährung und Heimat
National contact person + contact details	Stefanie Schumacher - stefanie.schumacher@ble.de - tel. +49 228 6845-3232 Maximilian Grimm - maximilian.grimm@ble.de - tel. +49 228 6845-2425 Johannes Bender - johannes.bender@ble.de - tel. +49 6845-3610
Funding	120,000.00 € for all German applicants
Eligibility of partners	Universities, Universities of applied science, Research institutes
Eligibility of costs	Personnel, travel, other costs related to the networking activities
Networking meeting	Participation is strongly recommended
Further guidance	Selected applicants will be contacted by the funding organisation (BLE) with further details on the procedure.

Ireland

Country	Ireland
Funding organisation	Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM)
National contact person + contact details	Manuel Lopez Vernaza – Manuel.LopezVernaza@agriculture.gov.ie – Tel. +353 (0)1 607 2617
Funding	€150,000.00
Eligibility of partners	Only RPOs eligible for grant-aid under DAFM's Competitive Research Funding Programme can make applications and submit funding requests, either as partners or coordinators, under the Call. RPOs eligible for grant-aid from DAFM are those institutions which fall within the meaning of Section One of the HEA Act, 1971 (Universities and Institutes of Technologies, etc.), plus Teagasc, the Marine Institute, Irish Cattle Breeding Federation, the National Botanic Gardens, Birdwatch Ireland and Indigo Rock Marine Research Station. Public RPOs based in Northern Ireland are not eligible for national funding. Research Institutions must be an approved RPO at the time of the launch of the Call. A project partner should be either a permanent member of staff at an eligible RPO or an experienced researcher with a PhD qualification contracted to work with an eligible RPO over the full duration of the project.
Eligibility of costs	Personnel, travel, other costs related to the networking activities.
Networking meeting	Participation is strongly recommended.
Further guidance	Research - Open Calls

Romania¹

Country	Romania
Funding organisation	
National contact person + contact details	
Funding	
Eligibility of partners	
Eligibility of costs	
Networking meeting	
Further guidance	

¹ Pending decision at national level

Institutes with in-kind contributions

Belgium

Country	Belgium
Funding organisation	Flanders Research Institute for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (ILVO)
National contact person + contact details	Nikki De Clercq - nikki.declercq@ilvo.vlaanderen.be - tel: +32 9 272 30 62
Funding	In kind
Eligibility of partners	Eligible applicants are researchers from ILVO.
Eligibility of costs	Personnel, travel, other costs related to the networking activities.
Networking meeting	Participation is strongly recommended.
Further guidance	/

Lithuania

Country	Lithuania
Funding organisation	Kaunas University of Technology (KTU)
National contact person + contact details	Alvija Šalaševičienė - alvija.salaseviciene@ktu.lt - tel. +37067271219
Funding	In-kind
Eligibility of partners	Eligible applicants are researchers from KTU.
Eligibility of costs	Personnel, travel, other costs related to the networking activities.
Networking meeting	Participation is strongly recommended.
Further guidance	/

Annex II – Template Expression of Interest Letter

Name and address of
organisation leader



Expression of Interest Letter

for participation in the

HDHL Knowledge Hub call - “Establishing the link between food processing and sustainable food systems”

We hereby confirm that *[organisation/institution]* intends to participate in the establishment and implementation of the above-mentioned Funding Action “Establishing the link between food processing and sustainable food systems”.

The overall aim of the Knowledge Hub is to foster transnational and multidisciplinary collaboration and networking in order to accelerate, further develop and increase the scientific and policy-relevant understanding of the relationship between food processing and sustainable food systems.

[Prof./Dr./other] *[function]* will represent the *[institution/organisation]* within the Food processing Policy Implementation Network.

Date:

Signature of the applicant's institution
/ organisation
(Name)

Signature of the main applicant
(Name)