I3-4-BIOFERTILIZERS

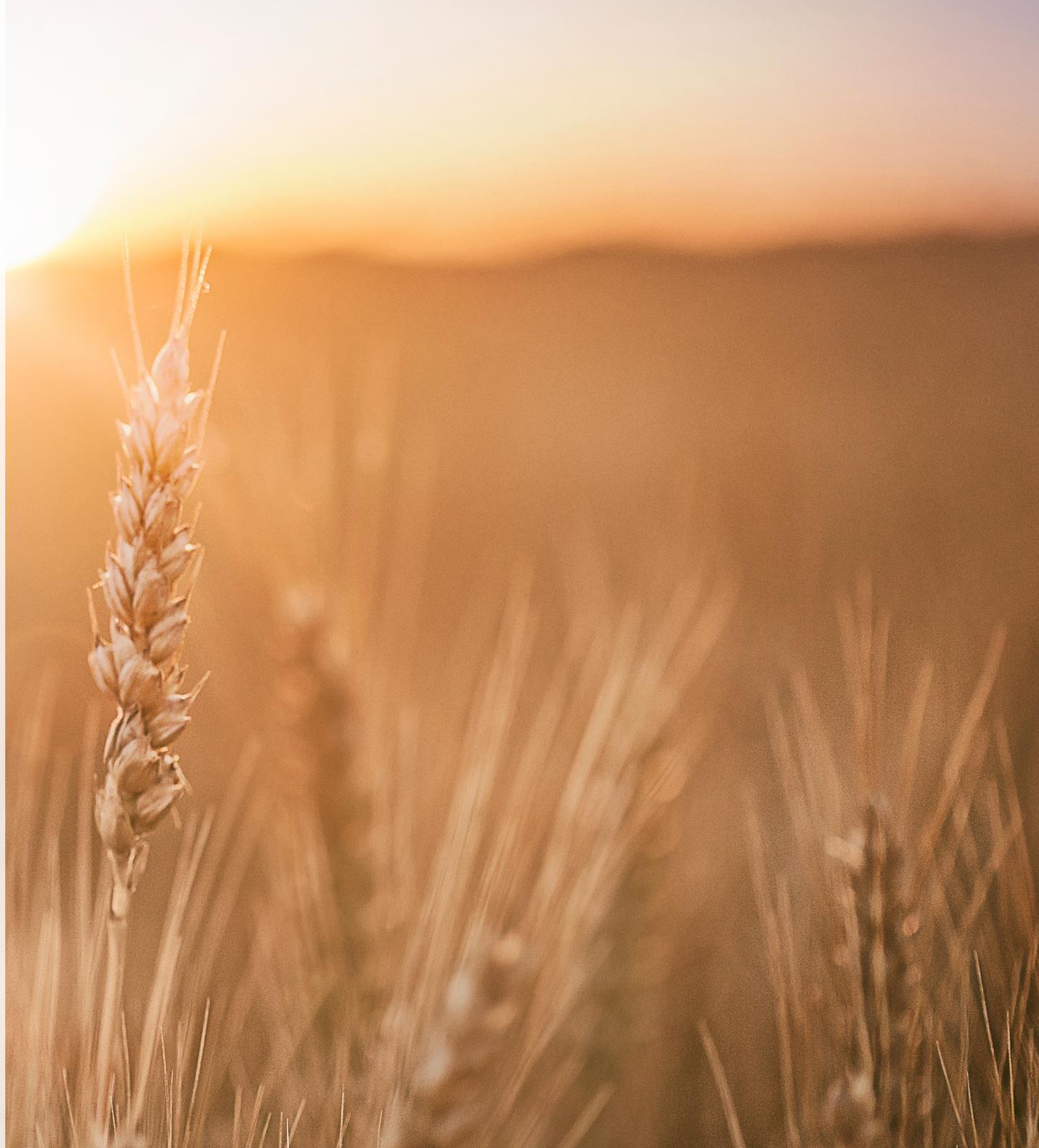
SOWING INNOVATION
HARVESTING SUSTAINABLE YIELD

INFODAY

Financial Support to Third Parties (FTSP) Call

September 9, 2025, at 14:00 CET

(Online)



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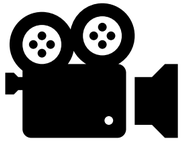
INFODAY PROGRAM

- **14h – 14h05 : Introduction** – *Vegepolys Valley, Thomas DEFFERIER, Innovation manager*
- **14h05 – 14h20 : Project presentation and open call objectives** – *I3-4-Biofertilizers Coordinator BETA Technological Center, Laura Mejias Torrent, PostDoc researcher*
- **14h20 – 15h10 : Presentation of the open call: scope 1 and scope 2, Eligibility conditions and funding** - *Agrifood Clust-ER, Maria Elisa Zuppiroli, Project Officer and BGT Consulting Group, Sonia Romano, Innovation manager*
- **15h10 – 15h30 : Question and answers** – *Vegepolys Valley, Thomas DEFFERIER*

Please keep your cameras and microphones off

Use the chat for questions



Replay will be available

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I3-4-BIOFERTILIZERS

SOWING INNOVATION
HARVESTING SUSTAINABLE YIELD

Interregional innovation investments for biofertilizers and circular bioeconomy solutions for a sustainable agriculture

Presented by:

Laura Mejias Torrent

UVIC-UCC

September 9th, 2025

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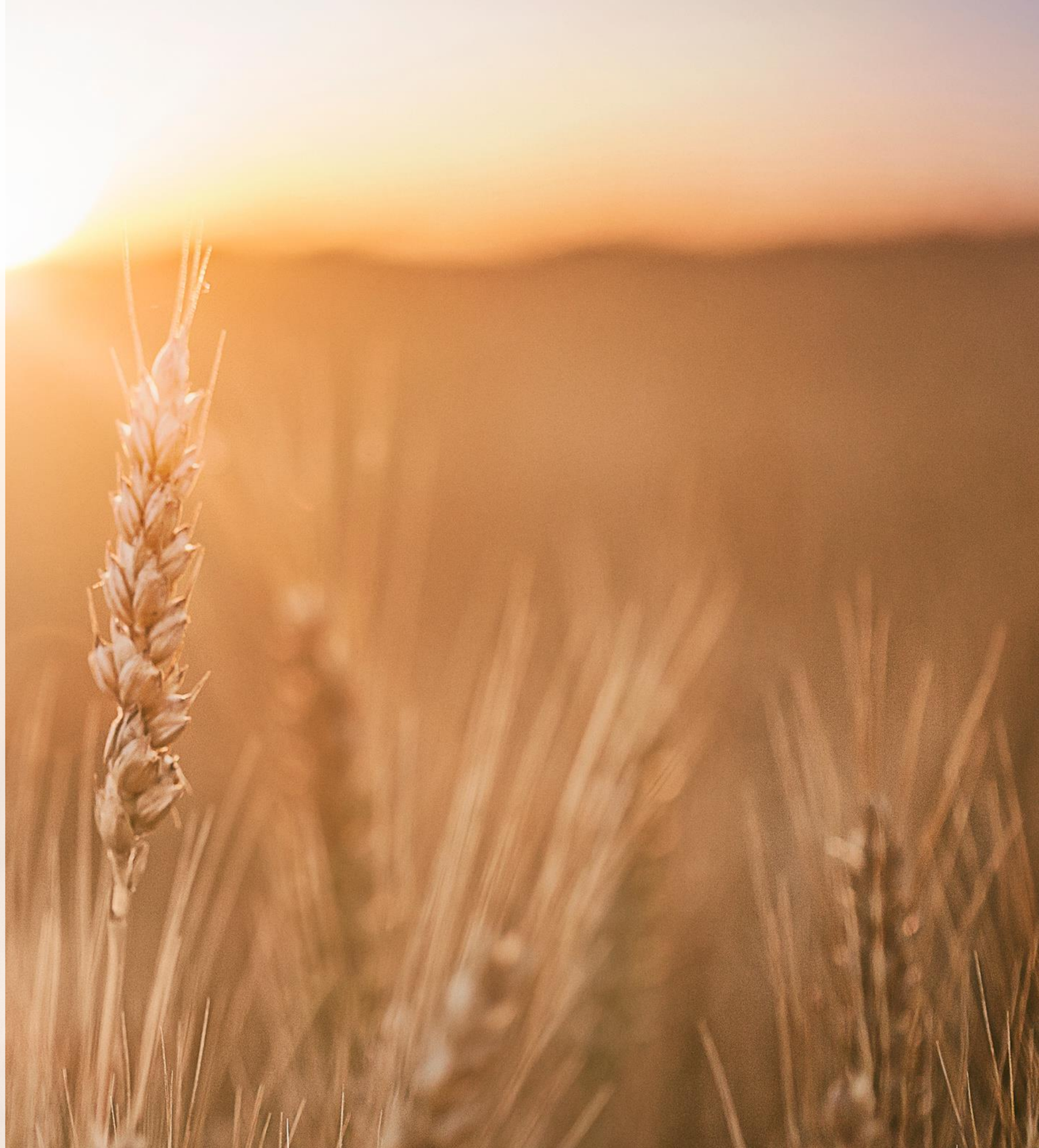

Current state of the fertilizer sector

- Production process with high energy consumption and responsible for 2% of global CO2 emissions
- Use of raw materials from non-renewable sources
- Impact on biodiversity and aquatic systems due to over-fertilization
- Increase in crop production at the expense of soil health alteration

- Legislative and strategic change to promote more sustainable practices
- Policies to promote the Circular Bioeconomy and nutrient recovery
- Regulation on fertilizer products 2019/1009EU Common Agricultural Policy

- Carbon credits can increase the value of bioproducts
- Increase in organic farming practices
- Increase and volatility in the cost of fossil fuels for the production of nitrogen fertilizers
- Increase in Europe's food sovereignty by reducing dependence on third countries
- Can be produced at a low price

- Increase the quality of biofertilizers by adapting them to the needs of farmers
- Promote and encourage the use of biofertilizers by farmers
- Research, innovation and transnational investment must be encouraged
- Need for acquisition of new equipment and training

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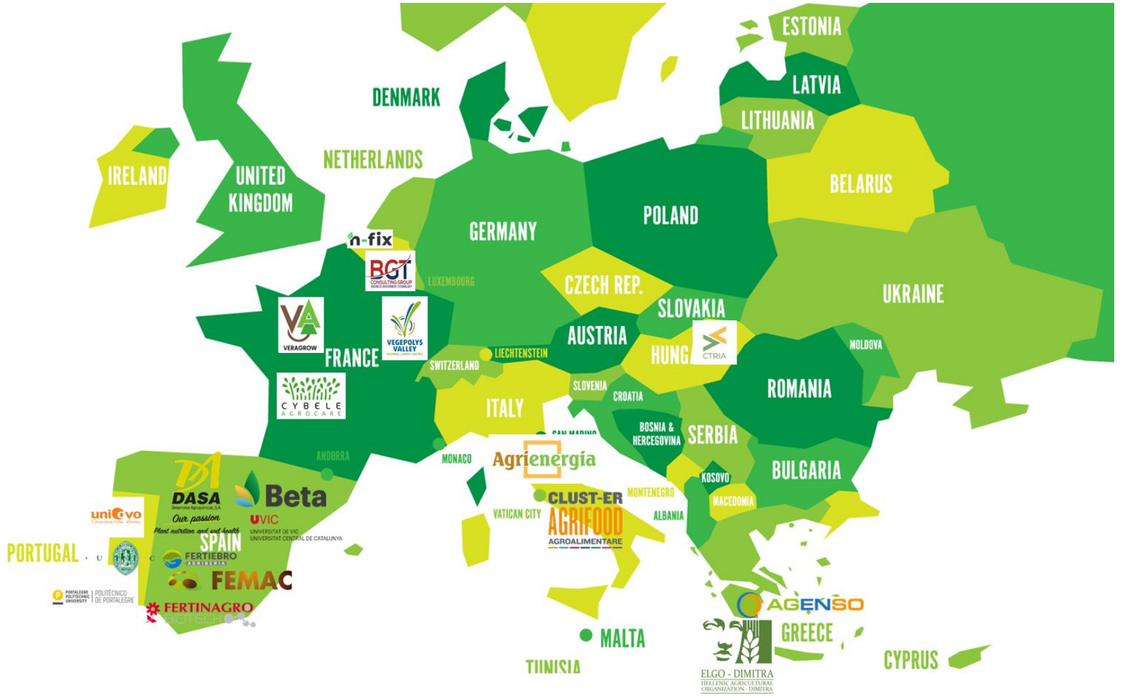
I3-4-BIOFERTILIZERS project

I3-4-BIOFERTILIZERS aims to promote **interregional cooperation** to support the scaling-up, demonstration, and go-to-market of a series of innovation investments in bio-fertilizers across Europe. Each identified business case is based on a previous needs analysis that demonstrates the potential disruptive potential of these cases and their possible contribution, once in the market, to supporting sustainability and circular economy in agriculture.

Duration: 36 months, 1.9.2024 – 31.8.2027
Total costs: 9,113,195.35 euros
EU funding (70%): 6,919,236.35 euros
Consortium: 19 partners

8 SMEs, 3 clusters, 3 research organizations, and 3 innovation agencies 1 and public authority from 12 different European regions



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Project action lines and investment

2024

I3-4-BIOFERTILITZERS action lines

2027

#1: State-of-the-art mapping

Understand the state of the art, relevant interregional actors, and investment and innovation needs

Identify barriers, trends and opportunities within the framework of rural and regional development in sustainable agri-food production

#2: Implementation of a portfolio of interregional innovation investments

Industrial scale production of biofertilizers and biostimulants

Decision support tools for optimized fertilization

Agronomic tests of biofertilizers for the preparation of the market entry strategy

#3: Financial Support to Third Parties

Financial support for third-party companies(SMEs and startups)

Technical, financial and market launch advice for biofertilizer products.

Technical training and capacity building in biofertilization and sustainable agro-industrial systems

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Biofertilizer market trends and ecosystem mapping

Fertilizer producers

- 72% familiar with biofertilizers
- Top barriers:
  - Inconsistent feedstock (60%)
  - High production costs (32%)
  - Logistics (28%)
- Most use manure, compost, and animal by-products
- 60% expect significant market growth
- Research needs:
  - Delivery systems (40%)
  - Nutrient mechanisms (32%)

Fertilizer sellers

- Biofertilizers < 20% of total sales
- Chosen mainly for:
  - Soil health (50%)
  - Environmental concerns (21%)
- Key challenges:
  - Price volatility
  - Low customer awareness
- Peak sales: Spring & Autumn
- Moderate growth expected; policy incentives needed

Farmers

- 57% aware of biofertilizers; none “extremely familiar”
- 52% already use them, mostly as complements
- Major barriers:
  - High cost
  - Performance inconsistency
  - Lack of EU support (74%)
- Only 28.6% produce on-farm organic fertilizer
- Demand for more waste integration & support schemes

Despite growing interest, biofertilizer adoption remains limited due to cost, awareness, and feedstock inconsistency. Targeted policy support, R&D, and network building are crucial to enable circular and sustainable growth.

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State-of-the-art in the fertilizing industry

Policy & market

- Market growth: Global biofertilizer market projected to grow from €2.1B (2020) to €3.3B (2026) at 7.8% CAGR, driven by demand for sustainable agri-inputs.
- Policy alignment: Strong synergies with:
  - EU Fertilizing Products Regulation (FPR 2019/1009) – includes microbial products (CMC 7).
  - CAP (2023–2027) – eco-schemes promote reduced mineral fertilization.
  - EU Soil Strategy & Farm to Fork – target 50% reduction in nutrient losses by 2030.

Barriers

- Regulatory fragmentation (e.g. differing national approvals for biofertilizers).
- Lack of harmonized standards for efficacy and quality.
- Low awareness/adoption among EU farmers (only ~10–15% current usage).

Innovation trends

- Focus on PGPR, mycorrhizae, N-fixing bacteria, often combined with biostimulants or organic carriers.
- New products emerging via Horizon Europe and CBE-JU projects.

Strategic recommendations

- Invest in field validation under diverse EU agro-climatic conditions.
- Establish biofertilizer certification schemes for quality assurance.
- Foster waste-to-fertilizer value chains under circular bioeconomy frameworks.

Despite growing interest, biofertilizer adoption remains limited due to cost, awareness, and feedstock inconsistency. Targeted policy support, R&D, and network building are crucial to enable circular and sustainable growth.

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I3-4-BIOFERTILIZERS investment cases

IC#1: UNIOVO

Organic fertilizers production from poultry manure

IC#2: FERTIEBRO

Production of high-quality liquid biofertilizers

IC#3: AGRIENERGIA

Biofertilizers production from compost of a biogas plant

IC#4: DASA

Circular and plant-extract based biostimulants production

IC#5: N-FIX

High-quality microbials (biofertilizers, biostimulants and biopesticides) from agricultural biomass residues

IC#6: VERAGROW

Scale-up production of vermicompost-based biostimulants

IC#7: CYBELE

Production and agronomic testing of PGPR-based biostimulants

IC#8: AGENSO

Digital decision support system for optimal biofertilization

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Financial support to third parties

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Funding for SMEs and start-ups investing in innovation in the biofertilizers and biostimulants sector - CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

I3-4-BIOFERTILIZERS

Grant | Cascade funding

Internal navigation

- General information
- Submission & evaluation process
- Further information
- Task description

General Information

Opening date
03 September 2025

Deadline model
single-stage

Deadline date
14 November 2025 17:00 (Brussels time)

Open For Submission

Expected duration of participation
12 months

Total funding available
1 800 000,00 €

Project acronym
I3-4-BIOFERTILIZERS

Full name of the EU funded project
I3-4-BIOFERTILIZERS: Interregional innovation investments for biofertilizers and circular bioeconomy solutions for a sustainable agriculture

Grant agreement number
101161143

Topic
I3-2023-INV1 - 2000-12-31T23:00:00.000Z

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I3-4-BIOFERTILIZERS

SOWING INNOVATION
HARVESTING SUSTAINABLE YIELD

Scope 1 and Scope 2
Eligibility conditions and funding

Maria Elisa Zuppiroli
Project Officer, Agrifood Clust-ER

Sonia Romao
Innovation manager, BGT Consulting Group

September 9th, 2025

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What is Cascade Funding?

Also known as Financial Support to Third Parties, FSTP, it's a fast and simple way for startups, SMEs, Universities and Research centers to secure financial support from major EU projects, to develop new technologies, fast track innovation and strengthen the EUs cooperation and competitiveness.

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How does it work?

Another way to apply for EU grants, rather than applying directly for big EU projects funding, with the following advantages:

Funds in the form of grants are received directly from a European consortia managing EU projects

Secure maximum €60K lump sum per SME/Startup

No loss of equity or taking on debt

No complex bureaucracy, simplified application process with higher success rate

Short term projects (up to 12 months) with simple reporting and administrative management

Access to strategic European networks

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BioFertilizers FSTP

The Cascade Funding call for I3-4-BIOFERTILIZERS project aims

to **support innovative initiatives from small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and start-ups**

across **various regions** according to FSTP rules under the I3 funding scheme.

It will be divided into **two different application Strands.**

Budget available: €1.8 Million

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Concepts

BIOFERTILIZERS

These are defined as **fertilizing products made entirely from organic matter of biological origin**, containing nutrients that enhance soil fertility. Biofertilizers originate from biological sources such as animal by-products (like livestock manure, dried blood, and bone meal), plant residues, human waste (including biowaste from households and commercial activities) and microorganisms.

Unlike synthetic fertilizers, biofertilizers are composed solely of carbon and nutrients derived from living organisms, excluding materials of geological origin such as those from fossilized or mineral sources.

BIOSTIMULANTS

As outlined by the Fertilizing Products Regulation (FPR), **biostimulants are products designed to stimulate plant nutrition processes independently of their nutrient content**. Their primary purpose is to enhance one or more of the following plant or rhizosphere characteristics: nutrient use efficiency, tolerance to abiotic stress, quality traits, and the availability of confined nutrients in the soil or rhizosphere.

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Call Strands and Scope

STRAND 1

Tools and services to support the deployment of biofertilizers to support Investment Cases (IC) of the project (see Annex)

This strand aims to answer specific needs of the Investment Cases

STRAND 2

Open Innovation: Development of new products and scale up of new innovative biofertilizers

This strand aims to scale up innovative biofertilizers initiatives (TRL 6 – 8)

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Call Strands and Scope

STRAND 1

INVESTMENT CASES

The Project foresees the implementation of a portfolio of investment cases, partners of the project: scale-up, piloting and demonstration of 8 investment/business cases, led by SMEs from our consortium.

INVESTMENT CASE 1: POULTRY MANURE COMPOSTING

Objective: Develop a technological solution to convert poultry manure into safe compost through aerobic composting, aligning with EU regulations and promoting a circular economy.

Benefits: Produces a 100% organic fertilizer, improves soil health, and reduces environmental impacts associated with manure disposal.

INVESTMENT CASE 2: NITRATE-FREE CALCIUM FERTILIZER

Objective: Create a fertilizer rich in soluble calcium without nitrates using vineyard by-products and olive oil, addressing nitrogen contamination issues.

Benefits: Offers a sustainable alternative to calcium nitrate, reducing environmental pollution

INVESTMENT CASE 3: ORGANIC FERTILIZER AND BIOSTIMULANT PRODUCTION

Objective: Scale up production of organic fertilizers and biostimulants using compost, biochar, and Effective Microorganisms (EM).

Benefits: Enhances soil fertility and structure, supports sustainable agriculture practices.

INVESTMENT CASE 4: PLANT EXTRACT-BASED FERTILIZERS

Objective: Develop high-efficiency fertilizers from organic sources of nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium using plant extracts.

Benefits: Provides a sustainable alternative to inorganic fertilizers, balancing soil microbial life.

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Call Strands and Scope

STRAND 1

INVESTMENT CASES

The Project foresees the implementation of a portfolio of investment cases, partners of the project, involving the scale-up, piloting and demonstration of 8 investment/business cases, led by SMEs from our consortium.

INVESTMENT CASE 5:

INVESTMENT CASE 5: MICROBIAL BIOFERTILIZERS

Objective: Improve the manufacturing process of microbial biofertilizers to make them more cost-effective and reliable.

Benefits: Offers a viable alternative to chemical fertilizers, supporting sustainable agriculture.

INVESTMENT CASE 6:

BIO-BASED PRODUCT COMMERCIALIZATION

Objective: Scale up production and commercialize bio-based products in the European agricultural sector.

Benefits: Promotes the adoption of sustainable agricultural practices.

INVESTMENT CASE 7:

AZOSPIRILLUM BRASILENSE PRODUCTION

Objective: Optimize industrial production and field testing of Azospirillum brasilense, a beneficial microorganism for plant growth.

Benefits: Enhances crop yields and supports sustainable agriculture practices.

INVESTMENT CASE 8:

DECISION SUPPORT SYSTEM FOR BIOFERTILIZATION

Objective: Develop a decision support system (DSS) using soil monitoring technologies to optimize biofertilizer application.

Benefits: Improves nutrient management efficiency and reduces environmental impacts.

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Call Strands and Scope

STRAND 1 **Tools and services to support the deployment of biofertilizers to support Investment Cases (IC)**

All the Tools and services required by the I3-4 BioFertilizers Investment Cases are listed in the Table at pages from 7 to 10 of the Call Text.

INFORMATION PROVIDED

- Tool/Service to be implemented
- Description of the tool/service to implement
- Geographical areas of implementation
- Max grant amount

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Call Strands and Scope

STRAND 1

Tools and services to support the deployment of biofertilizers to support Investment Cases (IC)

An example

Investment Case (IC)	Tool/Service to be implemented	Description of the tool/service to implement	Geographical areas of implementation	Up to max Grant amount
IC #1	Soil and nutrient management using organic fertilizers from chicken manure	Enhancement of soil fertility and crop productivity using chicken manure-based organic fertilizers. It promotes sustainable agriculture, reduces synthetic fertilizer use, and improves environmental health through soil analysis, field trials, and optimized application rates.	Região Centro (PT - Portugal) Região do Alentejo (PT - Portugal)	€60 000

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Call Strands and Scope

STRAND 2

Open Innovation: Development of new products and scale up of new innovative biofertilizers

This strand aims to scale up innovative biofertilizers initiatives (TRL 6 – 8).

The activities under this strand are designed to finalize the portfolio of products and solutions, which may include:

- Fertilizers made from poultry manure,
- Liquid biofertilizers derived from plant co-products,
- Biofertilizers produced from compost and biogas,
- Biostimulants extracted from plants, microorganisms,
- Biostimulants derived from vermicompost.

LIST NOT EXHAUSTIVE!!!

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Call Strands and Scope

STRAND 2

Open Innovation: Development of new products and scale up of new innovative biofertilizers

Applications on additional topics are welcome as far as they comply with the objective of the strand :

Biochar: Develop products utilizing biochar for soil amendment, or in bio-fertilizer formulation and carbon sequestration.

Algae-Derived Products: Investigate the potential of algae as a source for biofertilizers and biostimulants.

Insect-Derived Products: Explore the use of insects as a sustainable source for protein-rich biofertilizers.

Proteins/Amino Acids: Develop biofertilizers based on proteins or amino acids to enhance plant nutrition.

Humic/Fulvic Acids: Investigate the application of these organic compounds in biofertilizer formulations

LIST NOT EXHAUSTIVE!!!

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Call Strands and Scope

STRAND 2

Open Innovation: Development of new products and scale up of new innovative biofertilizers

This strand supports projects within these innovative product and solutions areas, categorized into the four scopes outlined in the table (pag 11 of the Call Text).

Scope	Description	Regions to be implemented	Up to max Grant amount
1. Scale-Up of Production	Develop strategies to increase production capacity while maintaining product quality and consistency.	All eligible regions	€60 000 (€120.000 for collaborative projects)
2. Innovative Formulants and Formula-tion Processes	Explore new formulation methods, including seed treatment, physical form tools and methods (granular, pellets, crystals, powder) to improve biofertilizer efficacy and application	All eligible regions	€60 000 (€120.000 for collaborative projects)
3. Evaluation of products	Evaluation of products, regarding their effectiveness in greenhouse or field conditions, Characterization of the mode of action of products, sources of variability)	All eligible regions	€60 000 (€120.000 for collaborative projects)
4. Service-related	Evaluation of products, regarding their effectiveness in greenhouse or field conditions, Characterization of the mode of action of products, sources of variability)	All eligible regions	€60 000 (€120.000 for collaborative projects)

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Other advantages for the funded SMEs

In addition to the direct financial support, selected SMEs will also benefit from a **comprehensive support framework.** A network of technical, scientific and innovation advisory experts will be established to assist them, covering areas such as intellectual property rights (IPR), legal issues, environmental impact, and more.

These structures will provide **support, guidance, and coaching throughout the implementation of their projects**. Additionally, an innovation and financial advisory programme will be developed, offering tailored go-to-market and scale-up support. External experts will be engaged in coaching sessions, based on the specific needs and requests of the SMEs.

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Eligibility criteria

SME classification

Qualified SMEs as defined by the European Union. Applicants are required to verify their SME status using the official EU SME self-assessment tool (link in the Call text).
Start-ups will also be considered eligible for this call, if they have been established at least 1 year before the end of the call date (14th November 2025).

Scope priorities and activities

Applications must address **one of the scope** priorities and develop activities as described in section 2.2 'Call Strands and Scope'.
Proposals that would address more than one priority will be considered as ineligible.
.

Geographical requirement

Applicant SMEs must be l**egally established in one of the eligible regions of the I3-4 BIOFERTILIZERS** open call
List of eligible regions: see Table 1, pag 14-15

Financial Requirements

If the proposal is selected for funding, applicants should be able to prove their financial stability and capacity and pass any financial check. This includes completing a financial capacity self -assessment (link in the Call text).

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Eligibility criteria (pag 13)

Language Requirements

All applications must be submitted **entirely in English**. Any proposal submitted partially or fully in another language will be automatically disqualified.

Submission

Each SME may submit only one application in this call, either as a single applicant or as a leader or partner in a consortium.
If an applicant submits more than one application, only the most recent (last) one received, will be admissible.
All earlier submitted proposals from that applicant, even collaborative ones, will be considered as non-admissible.

Requested funding amount

The grant will be provided as a **lump sum payment.**
For Strand 1, the maximum grant amount per type of proposal/challenge is mentioned in section 2.2.1 of the Call text.
For Strand 2, the total requested grant per single SME cannot exceed €60,000.
If applications are submitted by more than one SME in the form of **collaborative projects**, the total funding request must not exceed €120,000 per project.
Even if more than two SMEs collaborate, the maximum grant remains fixed at €120,000.

Project duration

The project duration is **maximum 12 months** starting from the date of the agreement signature

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Call Timeline

1st Sep 25 — Submission

14th Nov 25 — Eligibility check

5th Dec 25 — Technical Evaluation process

21th Jan 26 — Complaint evaluation

6th Feb 26 — Contratualization

27th Feb 26

Automatic Reception notification

Non eligibility notification

Evaluation results notification

Complaint results notification

. Each application will be assessed by consortium, selected in Elegibility check phase.

. Experts will be selected based on their expertise in fields relevant to the program being evaluated, ensuring they have no direct connection to any Investment Case under Strand 1.

. Additionally, they will represent three different regions covered by the project partners to ensure a fair and transparent selection process.

. They will follow the evaluation grid for each strand

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Evaluation criteria

STRAND 1

Quality of implementation and adequacy with the ICs needs (50 points max)	• Strand 1/ICs objectives alignment and compliance (15 points) • Feasibility of the project (15 points) • Cost effectiveness (15 points) • Team and Resources adequation (5 points)

STRAND 2

Excellence (15 points max)	• Innovation level (5 points max) • Feasibility and technical quality (10 points max)
Impact (15 points max)	• Expected benefits (5 points max) • Relevance and Need (5 points max) • Scalability and Sustainability (5 points max)
Implementation (15 points max)	• Cost effectiveness and workplan (10 points max) • Team and Resources adequation (5 points max)
Interregional collaboration – Extra points (5 points max)	The project applicant(s) come from two or more different eligible regions and submit an interregional proposal.

Important notes

- Overall score threshold: 30 out of 50.
- Proposals failing to achieve the overall threshold will be rejected.
- All applicants will receive an email with the results. Successful applicants will be given instructions for the next steps. Selected applicants will be required to sign a formal grant agreement.

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Funding details

Eligible costs and expenses

Eligible expenses and costs must be incurred only during project duration (from grant agreement signing to project end):

- Direct staff costs: no limitations;
- External expertise (subcontracting): max 30% of the total project budget;
- Travel: max 10% of the total project budget;
- Consumables: no limitations;
- Equipment: not eligible.

Funding scheme

- All payments will be in Euros (€).
- Initial payment: 50% upfront upon project contracting (grant signing).
- Final payment: the remaining 50% will be due upon project completion and submission of the technical report which will assess budget use against achieved results.

Beneficiaries' obligations and compliance

- Maintain records and documentation for 5 years after final payment.
- Make expenses records available for audits, reviews, or investigations.
- Keep original or authorized digital documents.
- SMEs/consortia must comply with all terms and conditions to receive funding.

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Monitoring and Reporting

Month 0 ..... Up to month 6 ..... Up to month 12

Project progress report

Report should include a brief description of the major results and achievements during the reporting period, information on how partners are cooperating with the I3-4-BIOFERTILIZERS and progress made towards achieving milestones and deliverables. It should also mention any deviations from the original project plan or any unexpected changes in the implementation of the plan.

End of project report

Final report submitted up to one month after the project end date, where should be detailed the results of the project. This reporting is mandatory and is in addition to any national reporting requirements. Failure to deliver the document will result in the nonpayment of the last part of the grant.

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I3-4-BIOFERTILIZERS

SOWING INNOVATION
HARVESTING SUSTAINABLE YIELD

I3-4 Biofertilizers FSTP

Collaboration with Living Labs

Elisabeth Molina
Project Manager, FEMAC

September 9th, 2025

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Collaboration with Agroliving Labs

Test and validation (for projects under strand 2) in AgroLiving Labs

Why is this relevant?

- Eligible costs allow **subcontracting real-life testing**
- Agroliving labs = spaces to **co-create, test & validate innovations**
- Support for applicants **without pre-identified testing facilities**

What is available?

- **3 Agroliving labs already identified in Catalonia**
- The consortia will open an **Expression of Interest** to include labs from other regions
- A continuously updated **online directory (Excel file)** will be available on project website

AGROPOLIS
UPC

CEREALIA
IRTA

IRTA–FRUITS
IRTA

Easy access to relevant testing environments, visibility, and support for innovation validation

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I3-4-BIOFERTILIZERS

SOWING INNOVATION
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I3-4 Biofertilizers FSTP

Q&A Session

Thomas DEFFERIER
Innovation Manager, VEGEPOLYS VALLEY

September 9th, 2025

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Q&A SESSION

Please use the chat for questions

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Thank you for your attention!

If you do have any questions on the FSTP Call,

please send an email to: info@i3-4-biofertilizers.eu

I3- 4 BioFertilizers website: https://i3-4-biofertilizers.eu/

Follow our Linkedin account: linkedin.com/company/i3-4-biofertilizers/

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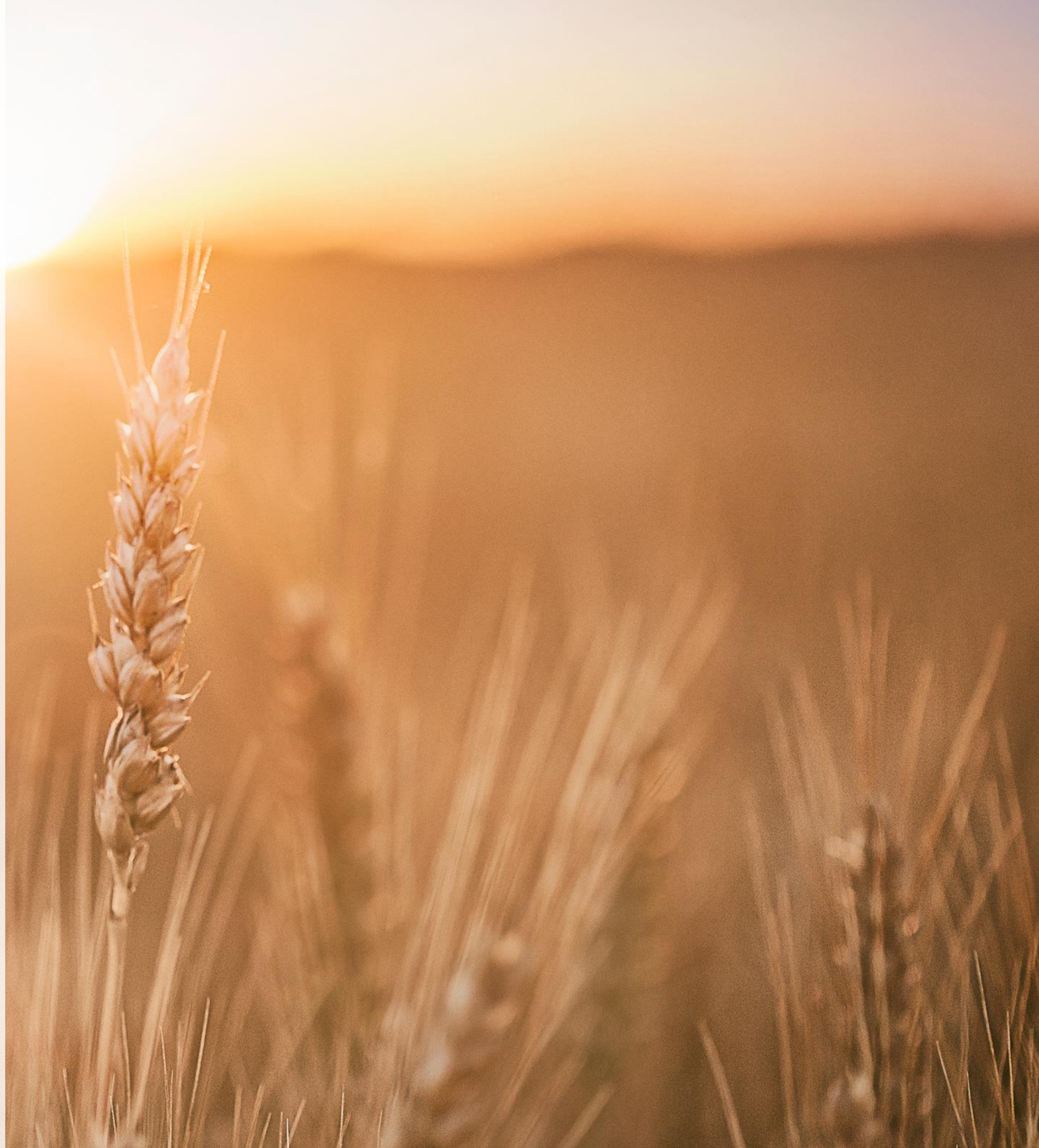
I3-4-BIOFERTILIZERS

SOWING INNOVATION
HARVESTING SUSTAINABLE YIELD

Thank you for your attention

September 9th, 2025



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