



GroundWork Open Call Terms and Conditions

Application opens: 1st September 2026. 9:00 Brussels Time.

Submission deadline: 19th November 2026. 15:00 Brussels Time.



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Welcome to the GroundWork Open Call Terms and Conditions (also Terms or Guide). This document outlines the rules for participation in the GroundWork Open Call, including eligibility criteria, maximum grant amount, timeline, submission rules, and the evaluation process.

Please take a moment to read this document carefully to understand the requirements and process. For any questions, please contact us at GroundWork.Help@fundingbox.com

Good luck!

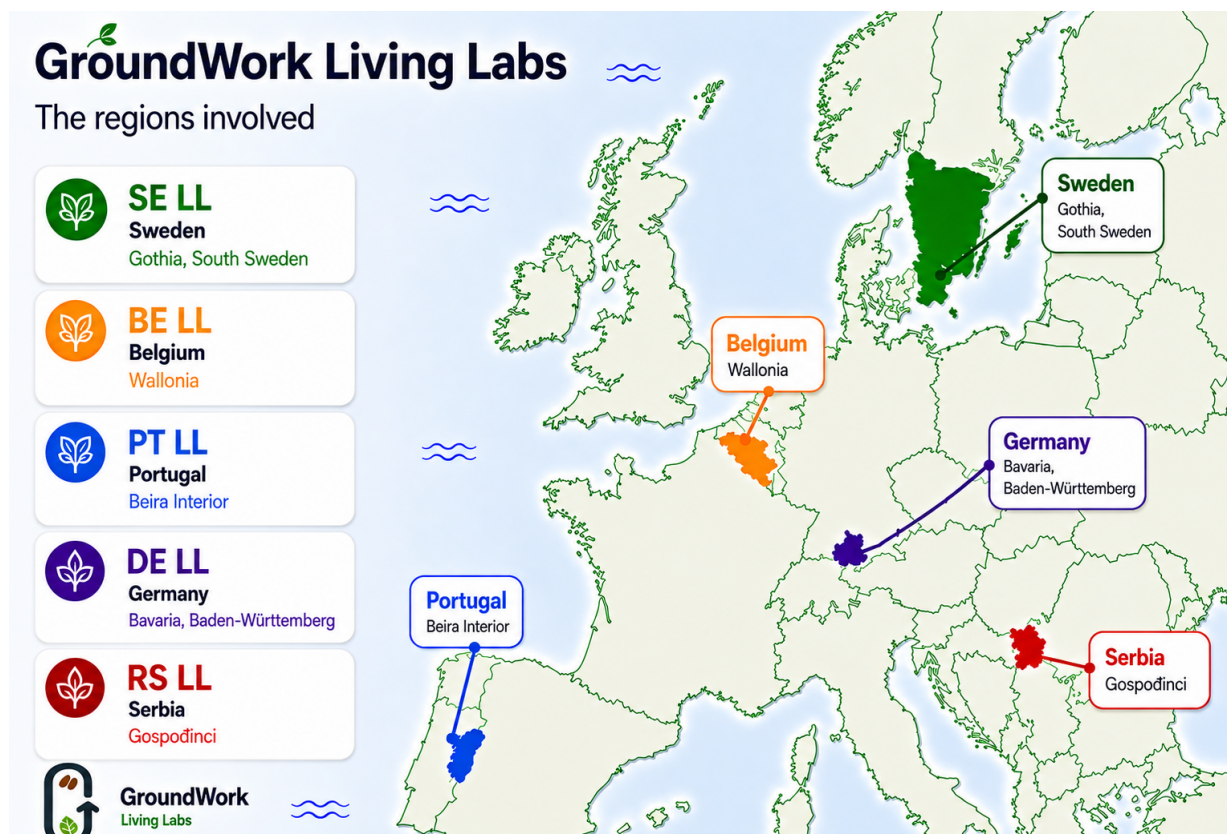
GroundWork Team

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are, however, those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or REA. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them. Ground project has received funding from the Horizon Europe Framework Programme under grant agreement no 101218207.

About GroundWork Project

The GroundWork Project "Regenerative living labs to improve soil ecosystem functions by adapting agricultural land use with livestock integration" addresses a critical environmental and economic challenge: currently, 60-70% of soils in the EU are degraded due to climate change and unsustainable agricultural practices, costing the EU an estimated €50 billion annually. Because intensive livestock farming is a major driver of this degradation, GroundWork aims to catalyse the transformation of the European livestock and agricultural sector. The Project seeks to improve soil health, enhance ecosystem resilience, and promote regenerative food production by deploying adaptive livestock management strategies.

To achieve this, the project has established five Living Labs (LLs) across Portugal, Germany, Belgium, Sweden, and Serbia, where a diverse group of stakeholders will collaboratively co-design and implement **Regenerative Livestock Grazing Practices (RLGPs)** tailored to specific regional contexts.



A central pillar of GroundWork's strategy is the use of [Financial Support to Third Parties](#) (FSTP), which is designed to directly involve farmers in the Living Labs and minimize the economic risks of dedicating their land to experimentation. The project will distribute FSTP funding to 75 regenerative farming projects in total. 42 initial experimental sites have been pre-selected to immediately launch the LLs operations, while up to **33 additional farming projects will be engaged through the GroundWork Open Call**.

Each selected Farming Project will receive up to €27,000 to support a 36-month Regenerative Grazing Programme. The overall objective of the Programme is to encourage Farmers to actively engage in regenerative farming, through simplicity, continuous guidance, access to finance & business consultation and data-driven communication. [Learn more at the GroundWork website.](#)



Open Call Terms and Conditions

Basic Conditions

Call opening date:	1 st September 2026, 9:00 (Brussels time)
Call deadline:	19 th November 2026, 15:00 (Brussels time)
Max. grant amount	The maximum grant amount is up to EUR 27.000 per Farming Entity. The grant will be paid as a lump sum.
How to apply?	Submit your proposal via our online form within the deadline. Your application must be in English, and all mandatory sections must be completed. Proposals can be modified after submission but only until the Open Call deadline. Multiple submissions are not allowed. If more than one proposal was submitted, only the one submitted closer to the deadline will be considered
Duration of the Experimentation Programme:	The Grant is offered together with the GroundWork Regenerative Grazing Programme. The Programme lasts for 36 months.
Who can apply?	<i>Farmers and individual entities engaged in farming activities (regardless of their legal form) located in the countries where Living Labs (LLs) are located (Portugal, Germany, Belgium, Sweden, Serbia).</i> In special cases individual participants may also be registered in EU Member States and its Overseas Countries and Territories (OCT) and Horizon Europe Associated Countries outside the LLs area. This will need to be justified.

Additional conditions related to who can apply?	Applicants under <u>EU restrictive measures</u> are ineligible. The GroundWork partners and affiliates and employees cannot apply due to the conflict of interest.
Project scope - type of activities that can be funded	The main activity expected from the Farming Projects is the implementation of Regenerative Livestock Grazing Practices (RLGPs; see the Glossary section) based on regional farming realities and contexts. Other activities: • <i>Soil health assessment.</i> • <i>Pervasive soil health monitoring using sensors.</i> • <i>Animal welfare assessment.</i> • <i>Environmental performance assessment (Environmental Life Cycle Assessment-ELCA).</i> • <i>Social impact assessment.</i> • <i>Sharing expertise, ideas exchange, and RLGPs co-design.</i>
Number of grants and total funding available	We will support up to 33 Farming Projects in this Open Call, distributed: • <i>PT LL – up to 7 Farming Projects</i> • <i>DE LL – up to 5 Farming Projects</i> • <i>BE LL – up to 7 Farming Projects</i> • <i>RS LL – up to 7 Farming Projects</i> • <i>SE LL – up to 7 Farming Projects</i> The total budget available for this Open Call is EUR 891.000,00 (EUR 27.000,00 per Farming Project).
Regenerative Grazing Programme	Our 3-year Regenerative Grazing Programme is designed to help farmers improve their farm's soil and environment by changing how their animals feed on the land (so-called "adaptive livestock management"). By joining this Regenerative Grazing Programme, farmers will become part of a local network of farmers and experts where they can share ideas, compare results, and learn from each other's experiences.

	The Programme is divided into 3 main stages over the 36 months. Farmers will receive their grant in installments upon the successful completion of each stage. For more details on the exact payment schedule and how each farmer's progress will be evaluated, please refer to the Payment conditions and Milestones Review chapters below.
Ground rules and formal requirements	When applying to the GroundWork Open Call, please also note that the following conditions will be checked: 1. Submission deadline: Only proposals submitted through the online form before the deadline will be considered. 2. Language requirement: Proposals must be written in English. If mandatory sections are in another language, the proposal will be rejected. Non-mandatory sections in another language will not be evaluated, but the proposal will remain valid. 3. Data accuracy: The information provided must be correct, complete, and allow proper evaluation. Extra material provided that was not requested in the form will not be considered. Although other resources may be used to verify that the provided data is true. 4. Completeness: Ensure all required fields are filled. Applications can be edited until the deadline, but no changes are allowed after that. 5. European dimension: Proposals should align with EU goals and contribute to creating a positive impact within the EU (see Glossary) 6. Conflicts of interest: Any conflicts of interest between applicants and Consortium partners will be checked. Partners, their affiliated entities, and their employees cannot participate. Each case of conflict will be reviewed individually. 7. Financial stability: Entities under liquidation, <u>in financial difficulty</u>, or excluded from receiving EU funding are not eligible. We also exclude companies in bankruptcy. 8. Original work: Execution of projects should not violate third-party IPR. It must be based on the applicant's intellectual property or applicants must be allowed to use third-party rights. IPR to the project can not be subject to any dispute. 9. AI content: The use of AI tools to improve clarity and structure is permitted, provided the content remains accurate and fact-based. Applications may be rejected if found to be AI-generated and lacking a factual foundation. All submissions must be authentic reflections of the project, and the applicant team must evidence the technical and operational capacity required for implementation. Providing unverifiable or non-authentic information is grounds for immediate rejection. 10. Acceptance of rules: By applying, Applicants agree to the Open Call Terms and Conditions outlined in this document.
More info about GroundWork	Please check https://groundwork-project.eu/ to find out more information about our Project

This Open Call is managed by FundingBox Accelerator sp. z o.o., and organised by the GroundWork Consortium partners : **CyRIC**: CY.R.I.C CYPRUS RESEARCH AND INNOVATION CENTER LTD / **MONT**: ASSOCIACAO RE-HAVIDA / **UC**: UNIVERSIDADE DE COIMBRA / **FC.ID**: FCIENCIAS.ID - ASSOCIACAO PARA A INVESTIGACAO E DESENVOLVIMENTO DE CIENCIAS / **AERA**: AERA Land gGmbH / **UAU**: UNIVERSITAET AUGSBURG / **HSWT**: HOCHSCHULE WEIHENSTEPHAN-TRIESDORF / **SLU**: SVERIGES LANTBRUKSUNIVERSITET / **SVEKO**: SVENSK KOLINLAGRING AB / **UGENT**: UNIVERSITEIT GENT / **GT**: GROUPEMENT DE RECHERCHE SUR L'ENVIRONNEMENT ET D'ETUDE DE NOUVELLES TECHNOLOGIES CULTURALES / **TRVI**: Terres Vivantes / **BIOS**: BIOSENSE INSTITUTE - RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE FOR INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES IN BIOSYSTEMS / **ZZG**: GOSPODJINCI ZEMLJORADNICKA ZADRUGA / **AUA**: GEOPONIKO PANEPISTIMION ATHINON / **REVO**: REVOLVE PLANET / **TU/e**: TECHNISCHE UNIVERSITEIT EINDHOVEN / **FBA**: FUNDINGBOX ACCELERATOR SP ZOO / **UH**: HELSINGIN YLIOPISTO / **AU**: AARHUS UNIVERSITET / **STRATA**: STRATAGEM ENERGY LTD / **REM**: REM ANALYTICS SA / **LaRE**: LANDREGEN E.V. / **BZA**: Bereich Zentrale Aufgaben der Bayerischen Verwaltung für Ländliche Entwicklung

All documents - including the template of the Sub-grant Agreement can be found [here](#).

Requirements for the farming projects

Regardless of the specific Living Lab being applied for, **all farming projects** must meet the following fundamental requirements:

- **Commitment Duration:** The farmer must be willing to engage their field as an experimental site and adhere to the project's requirements for a continuous **duration of three years**.
- **Land Tenure and Stability:** The applicant must either own the farm or hold a valid lease/rental agreement covering the entire duration of the project, with the assurance that the farm will remain in active agricultural operation throughout this period.
- **Livestock Integration:** The farming entity must own and manage livestock (e.g., cattle, sheep, or goats) and incorporate them into their land use, such as through pasture-based husbandry or active grazing systems.
- **Implementation of RLGP and Experimental Design:** The farmer must demonstrate a clear interest and availability to implement **Regenerative Livestock Grazing Practices (RLGPs)** and follow **holistic management principles**. This includes adapting to experimental designs, such as dividing test fields into comparable treatment (grazed/regenerative) and control (non-grazed/conventional) areas to allow for accurate scientific assessment. Furthermore, as a core requirement of participation, selected farmers must commit to co-defining a 3-year technical and financial roadmap during the first month of the Programme, known as the **Custom Farm Evolution Plan (CFEP)**. Developed in coordination with the assigned Living Lab Mentor, the CFEP will establish project budget, objectives, activity schedule, and deliverables, which will serve as the baseline for all subsequent performance reviews and grant disbursements.
- **Farm Size and Experimental Plots:** The farm must **engage in livestock grazing**. Indicatively, the experimental plots dedicated to the project should range between 3 hectares (Ha) and 10 hectares (Ha) to ensure practical implementation and scalability.
- **Monitoring and Data Sharing:** The farmer must be willing to **fully implement the study protocol**. This entails allowing soil quality and animal welfare assessments, accommodating the installation of IoT sensors on the farm, sharing historical farm data from prior to the project, and allowing all data generated during the project to be used for scientific publications.
- **Community Engagement and Peer Learning:** The farmer must be available to **host project events** on their farm (such as field days) and actively participate in **workshops, in-person events, webinars, and peer-to-peer learning activities** to foster knowledge exchange within the LL network.

Farms aiming to join the PT LL

Portugal, Beira Interior

Farms aiming to join the PT LL must meet the following fundamental requirements, in addition to the general ones:

- The farm must be located in Beira Interior, or within a 200 km radius of Monte Silveira Farm, within Portugal.
- The farmers must speak fluent Portuguese.
- The farmers should produce livestock on pasture .
- The farmer should be available to implement regenerative grazing practices.
- The farmer should either own the farm or have it rented for the duration of the project.

Farms aiming to join the DE LL

Germany – Bavaria, Baden-Württemberg

Farms aiming to join the DE LL must meet the following fundamental requirements, in addition to the general ones:

- The farm must be located in Bavaria or Baden-Württemberg, within approximately 50 km of the Living Lab.
- The farm must practise pasture-based cattle husbandry – either dairy cattle or suckler-cow husbandry.
- The farm must have at least 5 ha of grazing land on which the herd grazes (grazing is recorded at farm level, not only on dedicated plots).
- The farm test plots must be situated on cambisol soils (Braunerde), to ensure comparability of soil samples across sites.
- The farm test plots must be located on sloped terrain (Hanglage) and able to provide a test area and a comparable control area on the slope.

Farms aiming to join the BE LL

Belgium – Wallonia

Farms aiming to join the BE LL must meet the following fundamental requirements, in addition to the general ones:

- The farm must be located in Wallonia.
- The farmers should speak fluently in French.
- The farmer should either own sheep and/or cattle.

- The farmer must be ready to separate the experimental field into two parts (one part being grazed and the other non grazed). The two parts should each have a sufficient size to allow a correct experimental design.
- The farmer must be available to implement a cover crop on the same field at least twice during the three years period.
- The farmer should consider applying bale grazing or sowing biodiverse pastures.

Farms aiming to join the RS LL

Serbia – Gospođinci

Farms aiming to join the RS LL must meet the following fundamental requirements, in addition to the general ones:

- The farm must be located in Serbia and within a 150 km radius of Gospođinci where Living Lab is located.
- The farmers must be able to communicate in Serbian.
- The farmers should own sheep, goats or cattle.
- The farmers should produce livestock on natural or cultivated pasture, or be equipped to apply innovative manure management practices.
- The farmer should be available to implement regenerative grazing or manure management practices.
- The farmer should either own the farm or have it rented for at least 5 years from the date of submitting the application.
- The farmers should be ready to separate the experimental field into two parts (one part where regenerative grazing practices will be applied and one where conventional practices will be applied). The two parts should each have a sufficient size to allow a correct experimental design.

Farms aiming to join the SE LL

Sweden – Gothia (Götaland), South Sweden

Farms aiming to join the SE LL must meet the following fundamental requirements, in addition to the general ones:

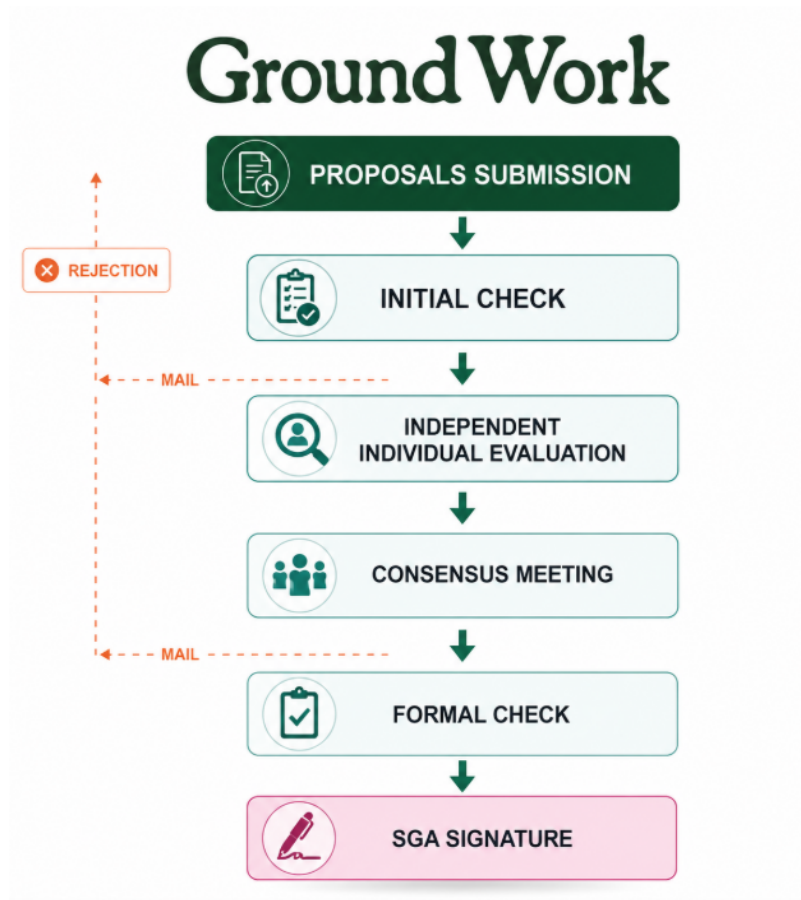
- The farm must be located in the Gothia (Götaland) region of Sweden.
- The farm must practice pasture-based cattle husbandry – either dairy or beef.
- The farmer must manage cropland on which cattle are currently grazing or on which the farmer is willing to start grazing. Experimental and control fields must be situated on cropland.
- The farmer should demonstrate interest in and availability to implement Holistic Planned Grazing (HPG) and regenerative grazing practices following holistic management principles.

Submission and Evaluation Process

Only proposals submitted through [the online form](#) before the Call Deadline (19th November 2026, 15.00 Brussels time) will be considered.

You will receive an email confirmation if the form is submitted correctly. If not, contact us immediately.

Our evaluation process is transparent, fair and equal to all participants. We will evaluate your project in a few phases described below. We will inform you about the results of the evaluation as soon as they become available.



Initial Check

After the closure of the Open Call, your proposal will be reviewed to ensure it meets the Call Terms and Conditions. This check will be based on the declarations in your proposal.

Independent Individual Evaluation

Eligible proposals will be evaluated by 2 independent experts from the pool of Consortium Partners' Experts, using predefined award criteria:

(1). EXCELLENCE will evaluate the clarity, ambition, and relevance of the farm's specific regenerative objectives, and how well they align with GroundWork's core goal of integrating regenerative livestock grazing practices (RLGPs).

(2). IMPACT will analyse third parties' contribution to mission soil objectives, general environmental and climate impact. The applicants must demonstrate a clear understanding of the LL area/ regional area where the project will be developed, for ensuring the impact and capabilities to cover the region's needs and challenges.

(3). IMPLEMENTATION will consider that project objectives are clearly defined and realistic and the project work plan is clear, complete, and effective. The applicants must demonstrate their management and leadership qualities, their ability to implement the GroundWork methodology, their capacity to carry through their ideas and understand the dynamics of the regenerative farming where they are trying to tap into and demonstrate the quality and effectiveness of the resources assigned in order to get the objectives/deliverables proposed.

Each criterion will be scored on a scale from 0 to 5, with evaluators providing individual reports and scores based on these criteria. Once the Individual Evaluation Reports are submitted, the final score will be calculated as a sum of the individual assessments provided by each evaluator on each criterion.

For each criterion, the minimum threshold is 3 out of 5 points. **The maximum total score will be 15 points, with a minimum total threshold of 10 points.**

Once we have an initial ranking per Living Lab, ties (if any) will be solved using the following criteria in order of priority:

- The highest score in the Excellence Section.
- Gender balance among the personnel responsible for carrying out the activities.

Consensus Meeting

The Selection Committee, including at least 2 Experts who participated in the Independent Evaluation, will decide, at this stage, the 'Provisional List of FSTP recipients' and 'Reserve List'. The decision will be based on the Ranking Lists per each Living Lab obtained as a result of the previous step. They will reach a consensus or majority of $\frac{2}{3}$ votes on the list of proposals to be selected, considering the evaluation scores and scope.

Keep in mind that although the highest-scoring proposals are usually chosen for funding, the Selection Committee can reject an application for valid reasons, such as not fitting GroundWork goals and scope, limited potential impact, commercial competition issues, serious ethical concerns, or possible conflicts of interest. The exact number of proposals approved will be decided based on the overall **quality** of the proposals.

Formal Check & Agreement signature

Finalists will undergo a Formal Check to confirm their legal status (e.g., registration, financial documents, tax ID, etc.). Therefore, we will ask you to provide documents to confirm all the details (these will be - not be an exhaustive list: company's registration document, tax ID number, ownership structure, financial statements, Bank Identification Form. Documents must be provided within the given deadline. If you don't deliver the requested documents on time, without a clear and reasonable justification, we will have to exclude you from further formal assessment.

After passing this check, we will invite you to sign the Sub-grant Agreement with the GroundWork Consortium to officially participate in the Programme.

After Sub-Grant Agreement signature

Payment conditions

The Grant will be paid in as a lump sum. Payments depend on the successful and timely completion of each stage of the work planned and outlined in the Custom Farm Evolution Plan (CFEP) developed at the beginning of the Regenerative Grazing Programme. Payments are scheduled in tranches as follows:

- 1st Milestone Review: Up to EUR 3.000 (11% of the total grant) by month M1 (Indicatively, June 2027).
- 2nd Milestone Review: Up to EUR 6.000 (23% of the total grant) by month M12 (Indicatively, May 2028).
- 3rd Milestone Review: Up to EUR 9.000 (33% of the total grant) by month M24 (Indicatively, May 2029).
- 4th Milestone Review: Up to EUR 9.000 (33% of the total grant) by month M36 (Indicatively, May 2030).

Milestones Review

We pay upon the delivery of the agreed results - not upon delivery of certain receipts. Therefore, Consortium Partners, gathered in the Selection Committee, will evaluate your progress regularly.

Stage	Explanation
Custom Farm Evolution Plan	Within the first month of the Regenerative Farming Programme, beneficiaries must work with their Mentors to define a Custom Farm Evolution Plan (CFEP). This Plan becomes an annex to the Sub-Grant Agreement and establishes the project's budget, Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), schedule, and deliverables The CFEP will be evaluated by the Selection Committee taking into account Deliverables quality (90%) and Deadline compliance (10%).
Milestones' review	Before each payment, the Selection Committee will review your progress. Performance will be evaluated by <i>Mentors</i> based on: • Deliverables quality (30%) • Technical Performance Indicators (60%) • Deadline compliance (10%) Each criterion will be scored from 0 to 10, and the final score will be calculated based on the weights indicated. A score of 7 points or more is required to continue in the program. For more details, please check the template of the Sub-grant Agreement.

Contact us

If you have any questions about our application process, feel free to email us at GroundWork.Help@fundingbox.com.

Please note that responses are given individually and do not change these Terms, they are provided for informational purposes only.

In case of any technical issues or problems, please include the following information in your message:

- *your username, phone number and email address;*
- *details of the specific problem (e.g. error messages you encountered, bug description, i.e. if a dropdown list isn't working, etc.); and*
- *screenshots of the problem.*

Complaints

If you believe there was an error in one of the evaluation phases, you may submit a complaint within five (5) calendar days after sending the results to you. Send it to GroundWork.Help@fundingbox.com in English and include:

- *your contact details (including email),*
- *the subject of your complaint,*
- *evidence of the specific issue.*

Please note that we will review only complaints related to:

- *errors in the process caused by our staff,*
- *technical issues beyond the applicant's control,*
- *clear human or mechanical errors made by our staff,*
- *incorrectly marked statements, minor clerical errors, and obvious typographical mistakes.*

Please note that we will not review complaints related to the content of the expert evaluations.

Complaints will be reviewed within seven (7) calendar days. If more time is needed, we will inform you via email. Anonymous complaints or those with incomplete information will not be considered.

Final Provisions

Any issues not covered by these Terms and Conditions are governed by Polish law, Horizon Europe Programme rules, and EU grant regulations.

We make our best effort to keep all provided data confidential; however, for the avoidance of doubt, you are solely responsible for indicating your confidential or sensitive information as such. Please be aware that your application form will be shared with the GroundWork Consortium partners.

You retain ownership of your intellectual property rights (IPR).

The signature of the Sub-grant Agreement is the initial condition to establish any obligations among applicants and any Consortium partners (with respect to the obligation of confidentiality of the application). The Sub-grant Agreement will include a set of obligations towards the European Commission (for example: promoting the project and giving visibility to the EU funding, maintaining confidentiality, and understanding potential controls by the EC/ECA, EPPO, and OLAF).

Please be aware that eligibility criteria will be checked throughout the process, including a final review and Experimental Programme.

The GroundWork Consortium reserves the right to cancel or modify the call at any time, informing applicants accordingly.

Need more help? Contact us at GroundWork.Help@fundingbox.com, and we'll be happy to assist.

Glossary

CFEP (Custom Farm Evolution Plan): A 3-year roadmap defined by the beneficiary and their Mentor during the first month of the Programme, which becomes an annex to the Sub-Grant Agreement and establishes the project's budget, Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), schedule, and deliverables.

European dimension: Your proposal should align with EU goals and contribute to creating a positive impact within the EU. Specifically, this means your project must demonstrate how the implementation of your Regenerative Livestock Grazing Practices (RLGPs) supports overarching European environmental policies, such as the **EU Soil Strategy for 2030, the Farm to Fork Strategy, the EU Biodiversity Strategy, the Nature Restoration Law, and the Zero Pollution Action Plan.**

Creating a positive impact means your proposal actively advances the **EU's 'Mission Soil' objectives**. Your project should aim to deliver concrete environmental benefits, such as:

- **Conserving and increasing soil organic carbon stocks** and reducing land degradation related to desertification.
- **Preventing soil erosion** and improving soil structure to enhance habitat quality for soil biota and crops.
- **Reducing soil pollution** and enhancing overall ecosystem restoration.
- **Increasing soil literacy** within your local community and society.

Ultimately, your proposal should clearly show how it will help **catalyse the transformation of the European livestock and agricultural sector** toward improved soil health, enhanced ecosystem resilience, and sustainable, regenerative food production.

FSTP (Financial Support to Third Parties): A funding mechanism used to distribute up to €27,000 to selected third-party farming projects to involve them in the Living Labs and minimize the economic risks of dedicating their land to experimentation.

Living Labs (LLs): Collaborative hubs established in five countries (Portugal, Germany, Belgium, Sweden, and Serbia) where stakeholders co-design and implement regenerative farming practices tailored to regional contexts.

Lump Sum: The payment method for the grant, meaning funds are disbursed in installments based on the successful and timely delivery of agreed results and milestones, rather than the reimbursement of specific receipts.

Mentors: Living Lab Coordinators and GroundWork Project Partners who work alongside the beneficiaries to guide the definition of their Custom Farm Evolution Plan and evaluate their ongoing technical performance.

RLGPs (Regenerative Livestock Grazing Practices): The core techniques and farming approaches implemented by the selected farmers, adapted to their regional realities and challenges.

Selection Committee: The decision-making board composed of Consortium Partners that is responsible for selecting the winning proposals, reviewing milestone progress, and validating all FSTP payments.

SGA (Sub-Grant Agreement): The binding legal contract signed between the selected applicant (third-party project) and the GroundWork consortium, officially bringing the farmer into the Experimentation program