



Circular Bio-Based Business models to create high-value Bio-based products in integrated value chains

Open Call 2026 – Opportunities for Financial Support

APRE, 07 May 2026



The C4B Consortium



C4B (Circular Bio-Based Business models to create high-value Bio-based products in integrated value chains) is a European project funded by **Horizon Europe Framework Programme**, under the topic: *HORIZON-CL6-2023-CircBio-01-9* – Business models that balance the share of power and profit in the bioeconomy.

- **Type of action:** HORIZON-RIA – Research Innovation Action
- **Project starting date:** 1 January 2024

11	6	48	4
Partners	Countries	Months	M€ Budget

About C4B



Aim

To accelerate the **development of rural communities** and their economic viability by developing **new fair and sustainable business models** for different **agricultural and forestry value chains** aimed at **balancing the share of power and profits** across novel bio-based value chains and at **enhancing the cooperation** among **farmers, foresters and industry**.

Objectives

- To develop and foster the **implementation and replication of the business models** for different primary production sectors in the EU
- To demonstrate the **applicability, scalability and replicability** of the new business models in different business settings and geographical areas **through FSTP**
- To define, through stakeholder engagement and MAA, **key research and innovation priorities** to support the rollout of the **EU Bioeconomy Strategy**
- To develop **policy recommendations for Member states** to implement realistic and effective national CAP Strategic Plans to achieve the new CAP objectives.

Main Activities



- Development and implementation of the C4B **multi-actor approach (MA<A)**
- Analysis of the C4B **case studies**
- Development of replicable and scalable **business models**
- Sustainability and impact assessment** of the C4B case studies and business models
- Open Call** to demonstrate the scalability and replicability of the business models

WOOD	VINEYARDS	CEREALS	APPLE	POTATOES	WETLANDS
Friuli Venezia Giulia Italy <i>Responsible partner: FAB FVG</i> Northern Sweden Sweden <i>Responsible partner: BFR</i>	Friuli Venezia Giulia Italy <i>Responsible partner: FAB FVG</i> Western Macedonia Greece <i>Responsible partner: <u>CluBE</u></i>	Friuli Venezia Giulia Italy <i>Responsible partner: FAB FVG</i> Western Macedonia Greece <i>Responsible partner: <u>CluBE</u></i>	DACH regions Germany, Austria, Switzerland <i>Responsible partner: UHOH</i>	Baden-Württemberg Germany <i>Responsible partner: UHOH</i>	Coastal regions of the Baltic and Northern Sea Germany <i>Responsible partner: UHOH</i>

C4B Business Models



Business models related to Forestry

1. Forestry Residue for Essential Oils and Hydrosol Extraction Model
2. Industrial Biocarbon from Forestry Substitution Model

Business models related to Agri-food

3. Cereal Residue Valorisation Model
4. Milling Residue Functional Food/Nutraceuticals Model
- 5A. Small-scale Cooperative Potato Residue Valorisation Model
- 5B. Centralised Industrial Potato Residue Valorisation Model
6. On-Farm Biorefinery for Apple Residues Model
7. Regional Supply of 70% Purity Polyphenol from Grape Pomace for Supplements Valorisation Model
8. High Purity Cosmetic-Grade Polyphenol Extraction Cooperative from Grape Pomace Model

Business models related to Peatlands

9. Wetland Biomass Biorefinery and Ecosystem Services Model

Open Call Factsheet



Call Title	C4B Open Call for Pilot Projects (FSTP)
Opening Date	1st June 2026
Closing Date	14th August 2026 at 17:00 CET
Total Budget	€ 480,000
Max Funding per Project	€ 60,000
Number of Projects funded	8
Expected Duration	Up to 12 Months
Target Audience (non-exhaustive list)	Groups of farmers, foresters or other primary producers in rural areas, Biorefinery SMEs, Agricultural and forestry industry, Other biobased industry, Sector organizations, Entities representing combinations of the above
Information and templates	https://www.c4b-project.eu/c4b-open-call-get-ready-to-apply/
Submission Link	https://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/runner/C4BOpenCall
Questions & Support	c4bopencall@apre.it

Scope of the Open Call



Objective

provide Financial Support to Third Parties (FSTP) with the aim of demonstrating the **applicability, scalability and replicability of the generalised business models** developed in different business settings and geographical areas, eventually stimulating the uptake of the new business models developed in the project.

To do so:

- **8 projects** (case studies) will be selected by a panel of 3 experts.
- The 8 projects must address the valorisation of by-products within one (or more) of the following **C4B target value chains: forestry, agri-food, peatlands**
- The 8 projects are expected to select one of the nine **business models** and demonstrate its applicability, scalability and replicability through a concrete business case.



Who can participate

- ✓ Any **legal entity** (e.g. SME, start-up, spin-off, research organisation, etc) established in one of:
 - **EU member states** (including overseas countries and territories);
 - **Horizon Europe Associated countries**
- ✓ **Single applicant** or **consortia** (max 3 partners)
- ✓ Partners of the C4B Consortium are not eligible to apply

Target Audience

- ✓ Primary producers (such as group of farmers, foresters, etc) in rural areas, agriculture and forestry industry and biorefineries
- ✓ SMEs and bio-based industry actors
- ✓ Value chain stakeholders
- ✓ Innovation and research actors
- ✓ Other

Expected Activities



Applicants are expected to propose a Pilot Project that demonstrates in real cases the feasibility of a C4B bio-based Business Model. To do so, it is recommended that at least a **TRL 4 – 5** is in place.

Mandatory activities

1. Tailoring a C4B business model to a specific business case (e.g. Developing a specific business case and governance structure on the basis of business models developed in the C4B project).
2. Assessing the feasibility of the business model, including at least two of the following:
 - Assessment of the technological feasibility.
 - Assessment of the governance structure and fairness.
 - Assessment of economic feasibility, market research.
 - Assessment of environmental, economic and social benefits.
 - Assessment of contribution to restoring carbon content in soil, increasing nutrients, revitalising marginal lands or ensuring food security (if applicable)

Complementary Activities (not mandatory)



Applicants can propose any additional, complementary activities such as (non-exhaustive list):

- Upgrade of digital platforms (if any or if needed)
- Establishing a stakeholder network and engagement mechanisms
- Implementing lessons learned and recommendations from the capacity building activities conducted in C4B
- Participation to / organisation of events, workshops, etc.

Capacity building program



In addition to financial support, selected beneficiaries will receive non-financial support through a dedicated **capacity building program**, including:

- **Informative sessions**, in the form of webinars, on the business model they applied for and on activities that should be carried out to successfully complete the validation process.
- **Coaching sessions** to guide the use cases in their day-to-day validation process.
- **Networking workshops** with all use cases to discuss common issues.

***Note:** the abovementioned activities and sessions are subject to the C4B project Grant Agreement, therefore are not meant to be part of applicants' proposal. Accordingly, the frequency of informative sessions, the amount of information, the number of coaching activities and all other operational aspects are up to C4B consortium decision and management.*

Application Procedure



A complete application consists of the following mandatory parts, to be provided in English:

- the **administrative data (Part A)**, to be filled online;
- the **technical description of the pilot project and the budget estimation (Part B)**, filled in the provided template, saved as PDF and uploaded along with Part A.

HOW TO APPLY

1. Go to: <https://www.c4b-project.eu/c4b-open-call-get-ready-to-apply/>
2. Download and carefully read the Open Call document, which contains all the information about the call conditions, eligibility criteria and evaluation process.
3. Download the Application Form – Part B template.
4. Fill in the **Application Form – Part B** by providing the technical and financial details of the proposed pilot project and sign the Declaration of Honour (DoH).
5. Click on “Apply here” to access the online application system (EU survey platform).
6. Fill in the online **Application Form – Part A**, including the required administrative information.
7. Save the completed Application Form – Part B as PDF and upload it to the online Application system.
8. Review all the information provided and click on “Submit” to send the application.

Application Procedure



General Information

*** Project Acronym**

20 character(s) maximum

*** Project Title**

200 character(s) maximum

*** Project Abstract**

2000 character(s) maximum

0 out of 2000 characters used.

Submission

*

Technical Description (Part B)

Please name your file: C4B_ACRONYM_PartB.pdf

 Only files of the type pdf are allowed

Select file(s) to upload

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Application Form – Part B



Section 1 – Concept Description

- 1.1 The Idea and Objectives
- 1.2 Governance Structure and Involvement of Primary Producers

Section 2 – Technical Excellence and Implementation

- 2.1 Innovation and State of the Art
- 2.2 Feedstock and waste streams
- 2.3 Tasks and Activities
- 2.4 Resources and Budget Estimation
- 2.5 Capacity and Team expertise

Section 3 – Impact

- 3.1 Expected Impacts (KPIs)
- 3.2 Scale-up Potential

Section 4 – Scalability

- 4.1 Scale-up Potential
- 4.2 Replicability (EU Dimension)
- 4.3 Barriers and Enablers

Note: guiding questions are provided for each section.

Part B must not exceed 10 pages

- *Front page, Section 2.4 “Resources and Budget Estimation”, Declaration of Honor are EXCLUDED from the page limit.*
- *Tables are INCLUDED in the page limit.*
- *Excess pages will be disregarded.*

Application Form – Part B



Budget Table

Partner 1 [Acronym]		
Cost Category	Description of costs	Estimated Amount (€)
Personnel		
Subcontracting <i>(if necessary to implement the action)</i>		
Travel, accommodation and subsistence <i>(if necessary to implement the action)</i>		
Equipment <i>(if necessary to implement the action)</i>		
Other goods, works or services <i>(if necessary to implement the action)</i>		
TOTAL		€

Award criteria and scoring system



Criteria		Points	Weight	Total (points x weight)	Minimum Pass Score
Concept description				Max 15	Min 10
1.1	Clearness	1-5	1	Max 5	
1.2	Involvement of primary production	1-5	1	Max 5	
1.3	Organizational structures	1-5	1	Max 5	
Technical Excellence				Max 15	Min 10
2.1	Innovativeness	1-5	1	Max 5	
2.2	Quality of the proposed solution	1-5	1	Max 5	
2.3	Quality of the project plan, budget and proponent(s)	1-5	1	Max 5	
Impact				Max 30	Min 20
3.1	Environmental	1-5	2	Max 10	
3.2	Social	1-5	2	Max 10	
3.3	Economic	1-5	2	Max 10	
Scalability				Max 20	Min 10
4.1	Scalability and growth potential	1-5	1	Max 5	
4.2	Potential environmental impact in the targeted sector	1-5	1	Max 5	
4.3	Potential social impact in the targeted sector	1-5	1	Max 5	
4.4	Potential economic impact in the targeted sector	1-5	1	Max 5	
Bonus Points				Max 10	Min 0
TOTAL				Max 90	Min 50

Evaluation Process



1. **Eligibility check:** administrative requirements will be verified.
2. **Expert Evaluation:** each eligible proposal will be evaluated by 3 independent experts based on the Award criteria.
3. **Score and Consensus:** the final score for each eligible proposal is determined and communicated to applicants, along with a detailed Evaluation Summary Report
 - **Overall threshold:** a minimum score of **50/90** is needed to be selected. It's also needed to reach the **threshold** in each of the four criteria.
 - **Knock-out Rule:** If a proposal receives a score below the threshold in ANY of the four criteria (e.g., scoring 9/15 in Concept Description, but the maximum in the three other criteria), it will be automatically rejected, regardless of the total score.

Ranking and shortlisting



To ensure a broad validation of the C4B Business Models, the final selection of the 8 funded use case projects will be guided by a **Business Model diversity objective**:

- The **8 available slots** will be allocated to the highest-ranked proposals (above the minimum threshold) that address different business models among the 9 available.
- If a specific BM is not addressed by any proposal above the minimum threshold, the remaining slot(s) will be reallocated to the next highest-ranked proposal(s) in the general list, even if they address a Business Model already covered.

A **reserve list** will be established to ensure full budget absorption and maximise the call impact, in the event of:

- Official withdrawal by a selected proposal;
- Technical or administrative non-compliance identified during the contracting phase;
- Failure to respond to the formal invitation within the specified deadline.

The C4B consortium will proceed to invite proposals from the reserve list, following the established ranking order and the business model diversity objective (see Section 6.4.1).

Financial support



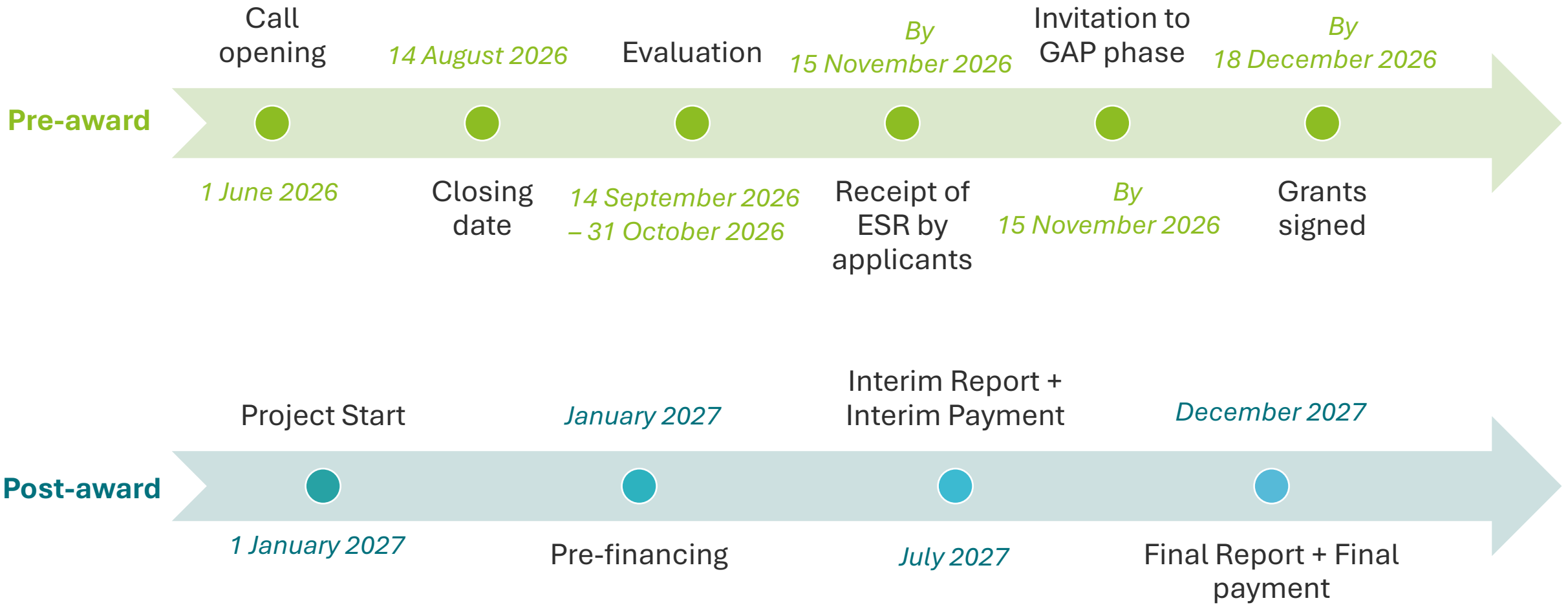
Budget and Funding rate

- Total budget: **€ 480.000**
- Maximum grant amount per project: **€ 60.000**
- Maximum number of projects granted: **8**
- Funding rate: **100% of eligible costs**
- Form of funding: **Lump Sum**

Payment schedule

- **Pre-financing: 45%** upon signature of the Sub-grant Agreement (January 2027, M1 of projects' implementation).
- **Interim Payment: 35%** upon approval of the Interim Report (July 2027, M7 of projects' implementation in case of 12-months projects; after 50% of projects' completion in case of different duration).
- **Final Payment: 20%** upon approval of the Final Report (by 30 days after December 2027, M12 of projects' implementation in case of 12-months projects; by 30 days after the full projects' completion in case of different duration).

Timelines



Contact details



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Thank you for your attention!



 **website**
www.c4b-project.eu



 **LinkedIn**
www.linkedin.com/company/c4b-biobased-models/



 **Twitter**
www.twitter.com/C4B_project