Training 1: accessing and applying for relevant public fundings and grants

Module scripts - English

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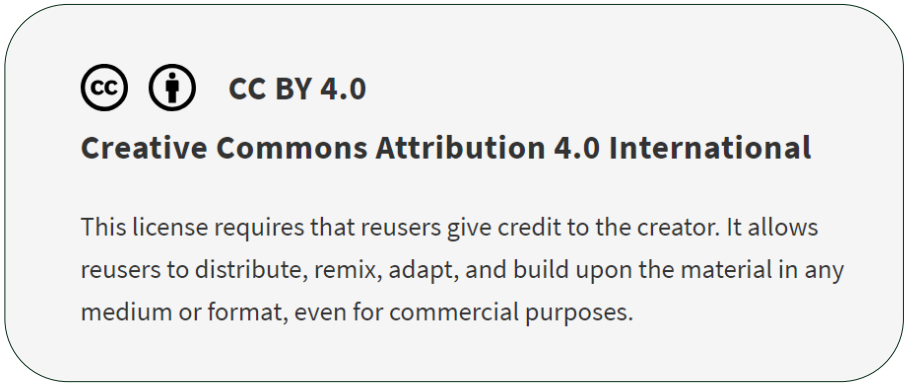
Training course #1: accessing and applying for public funding and grants

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Objectives of the training

This training is part of the work of WP5 – task 5.4 within the BIN2BEAN project.

Objective: The objective of this training is to equip entrepreneurs and SMEs operating in the biowaste-to-soil improvers value chain with the knowledge and practical tools needed to access and apply for relevant European and national funding opportunities and grants. Through short, targeted learning modules, the course focuses on understanding EU funding mechanisms and developing competitive project proposals as an effective tool to enhance the market readiness and scalability of biowaste-derived soil solutions across Europe.
Target audience: Entrepreneurs and SMEs operating in the biowaste valorization sector, specifically those producing soil improvers.

Structure of the training

Unlocking EU funding for soil improver innovations: a practical guide for entrepreneurs

- 9 short video modules (max 5-7 minutes each)
- Each video is accompanied by optional downloadable support material (slide deck, glossary, checklist, reference links)
- Designed for asynchronous, pan-European access
- Final quiz to obtain a certificate of participation
- Scripts available in English, Greek, Dutch, German, Italian.

Content of the online training session on theoretical background

Module 1 – Why Funding Matters
Objective: Introduce the course and its relevance to the biowaste-to-soil improvers value chain.

- Role of public funding in market innovation
- How the course is structured and how to use the materials

Support material: Terminology glossary and useful links

Module 2 – Introduction to EU Funding Landscape
Objective: Provide an overview of relevant EU programmes and instruments.

- Horizon Europe, LIFE Programme, Circular Bio-based Europe JU
- Topics, funding rates and eligibility

Support material: Funding programme factsheet

Module 3 – Finding the Right EU Calls
Objective: Teach how to find and understand open EU funding opportunities.

- How to use the EU Funding & Tenders Portal
- Tips for reading calls: scope, expected outcomes, TRLs
- Thematic focus on soil, biowaste, and circular economy

Support material: Links to official portal guides of the European Commission

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Module 4 – Writing a Winning Proposal (Part 1): Excellence & Relevance

Objective: Focus on the technical and scientific part of the proposal and how to write the Excellence section

- Key sections of a typical EU proposal (excellence, impact, implementation)
- Aligning your idea with the call scope
- Drafting objectives and methodology
- Highlighting innovation and EU-added value
- Success factors and common mistakes

Support material: Excellence writing checklist

Module 5 – Writing a Winning Proposal (Part 2): Impact
Objective: Focus on how to write the impact section

- Market uptake, scalability, and socio-environmental impact
- Measures to maximise the impact
- Success factors and common mistakes to avoid

Support material: Impact writing checklist

Module 6 – Writing a Winning Proposal (Part 3): Implementation
Objective: Focus on how to write the implementation section

- Work packages, roles, timelines, and risk management
- Success factors and common mistakes to avoid

Support material: Implementation writing checklist

Module 7 – Financial Planning in EU Projects
Objective: Introduce the basics of budgeting and eligible costs.

- Budget categories: personnel, travel, subcontracting, etc.
- Funding rates and cost reporting
- Tools and templates

Support material: Links to AGA and other resources for budget planning

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Module 8 – National and Regional Funding: Where and How to Look
Objective: Provide a strategy for navigating national/regional funding.

- Overview of where to look: NCPs, regional innovation agencies, Enterprise Europe Network
- EU-cofinanced national programmes (e.g. CAP, ERDF, LIFE)
- Tips to stay informed: newsletters, platforms, intermediaries

Support material: List of relevant links and resources

Module 9 – EU Programmes & Calls for Soil Health
Objective: Present EU initiatives specifically supporting soil-related innovation.

- EU Mission “A Soil Deal for Europe”
- Horizon Europe Cluster 6
- LIFE projects on soil restoration and circular bioeconomy

Support material: Updated call list (with links)

Videos script and training content

Module 1 – Why Funding Matters

Objective: Introduce the course and its relevance to the biowaste-to-soil improvers value chain.

- Role of public funding in market innovation
- How the course is structured and how to use the materials

Script:

Hello and welcome to the BIN2BEAN training series, designed specifically for entrepreneurs and small businesses working in the biowaste-to-soil improvers value chain. My name is Sara Daniotti, and, together with my colleague Giulia Cividni, I'm pleased to guide you through this learning journey on accessing and applying for public funding and grants.

But why does funding matter for innovators?

- First, it reduces risk. Innovating in the biowaste sector can be expensive and uncertain. Public funding helps share that risk, so you don't have to shoulder it alone.
- It accelerates market readiness. Funding allows you to test, validate, and improve your solutions so they're ready for customers and investors across Europe.
- It enables scaling up. Many small businesses have excellent innovations but lack resources to grow. Public funding can provide the support you need to reach wider markets and achieve greater impact.
- It builds credibility. Securing EU or national funding signals that your project is innovative and solid, making it easier to attract partners and investors.

And that's exactly why this training exists—to help you navigate the funding landscape and make the most of these opportunities to grow your business.

Throughout this course, you'll learn:

- How European funding mechanisms work
- How to find funding opportunities relevant to your business
- How to write strong, competitive proposals
- How to plan financially for funded projects

To make the most of this training:

- Watch each video module. They're concise and practical, so you can fit learning into your daily schedule.
- Download the support materials. Slides, glossaries, checklists, and helpful links are all provided to deepen your knowledge.
- Explore translations. Scripts are available in different languages if you prefer to study in your native language.
- Take the final quiz. Completing the quiz will earn you a certificate of participation—a valuable asset for your professional journey.

For this module, we've also prepared a terminology glossary. It explains key funding terms that you'll encounter during the training. I encourage you to download it and keep it handy as you progress.

Thank you for joining me in this journey! Let's begin.

Module 2 – Introduction to EU Funding Landscape

Objective: Provide an overview of relevant EU programmes and instruments.

- Horizon Europe, LIFE Programme, Circular Bio-based Europe JU
- Topics, funding rates and eligibility

Script

Welcome back to the BIN2BEAN training series on accessing and applying for public funding and grants! In this module, we'll explore the European funding landscape and help you understand the main programmes that could support your biowaste-to-soil improver innovations.

Before we dive into specific programmes, it's important to understand that public funding in the EU comes from many different sources, each designed to support particular policy goals, sectors, and types of innovation. In this module, we'll focus on the main European-level programmes that are most relevant for the biowaste-to-soil improvers sector. A dedicated module later in this course will show you how to search and navigate national funding opportunities that match your business.

Let's now look at some of the main EU programs that fund projects in the biowaste-to-soil improvers value chain:

Horizon Europe

One of the most important programmes you should know about is Horizon Europe, the biggest research and innovation programme in the world, with a budget of nearly €95 billion for the period 2021-2027. It's directly implemented by the European Commission and funds projects across many fields of science, technology, and innovation.

The programme is organised into three main pillars, each supporting different aspects of research and innovation. For businesses working in biowaste-to-soil improvers, the most relevant part of Horizon Europe is Pillar II - Global Challenges and European Industrial Competitiveness. It has the largest share of the programme's budget, around €52.7 billion and funds cross-European collaborative projects that bring together industry and research organisations. It focuses on creating new technologies and solutions that help achieve the EU's policy goals and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Within Pillar II, the work is organised into six main Clusters. The most relevant for our sector is Cluster 6: Food, Bioeconomy, Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Environment. Cluster 6 covers topics like sustainable agriculture, circular bioeconomy, resource efficiency, and environmental protection—all crucial areas for turning biowaste into soil solutions.

Another unique feature of Horizon Europe is the concept of Missions. Missions focus on tackling major societal challenges with specific, measurable targets for 2030. They're not separate from the Clusters—instead, they're integrated into them. For example, the Mission "A Soil Deal for Europe" aims to establish at least 100 living labs and lighthouses to improve soil health by 2030.

So, if your project relates to soil health, you might find opportunities both under Cluster 6 calls and under calls labelled as part of the Soil Mission.

Horizon Europe offers different types of funding actions:

- Research and Innovation Actions (RIA): These support projects exploring new knowledge and developing early-stage technologies. Funding can cover up to 100% of eligible costs for all participants.
- Innovation Actions (IA): These support projects closer to the market, such as testing, piloting, or demonstrating new solutions. For businesses, funding usually covers around 70% of eligible costs, while non-profit organisations can receive up to 100%.

- Coordination and Support Actions (CSA): These fund activities like networking, policy analysis, or sharing best practices, but not direct research or product development. CSAs can be funded up to 100% of eligible costs.

Finally, participation in Horizon Europe is open to any legal entity, regardless of where it is established—even outside Europe—unless specific restrictions are mentioned in a call. However, only legal entities established in EU Member States or in countries associated to Horizon Europe are eligible for funding. Additionally, for most collaborative projects, you'll need a consortium of at least three independent organisations, each based in a different EU Member State or Associated Country. At least one must come from a Member State.

CBE-JU

Another important programme for your sector is the Circular Bio-based Europe Joint Undertaking, or CBE JU. CBE JU is a public-private partnership between the European Union and the Bio-based Industries Consortium**.** Its goal is to support the development of a competitive and sustainable bio-based economy in Europe.

The programme has a budget of around €2 billion for 2021 to 2027. It funds projects that transform biological resources—including biowaste—into new products, materials, and solutions, building innovative circular value chains that can reduce dependence on fossil resources and lowering environmental impacts. To reach this objective, it encourages collaboration between academic and industrial partners.

The peculiar aspect of CBE JU projects is that they can target flagship projects that can bring new bio-based solutions close to market, with relatively high budget.

Funding rates ad eligibility conditions under CBE JU are similar to Horizon Europe, often covering between 70% and 100% of eligible costs.

If you aim to develop soil improvers from biowaste as part of a bio-based value chain, and you're ready to work with partners from different sectors, CBE JU can be an excellent funding opportunity.

LIFE Programme

Finally, I would like to highlight the LIFE Programme. LIFE is the EU's funding instrument dedicated to environment, climate action, and nature conservation, running since 1992.

For 2021 to 2027, LIFE has a budget of about €5.4 billion. It funds projects that help:

- Protect the environment and biodiversity
- Improve air and water quality
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions
- Promote the circular economy

What makes LIFE interesting for biowaste-to-soil improvers is that it supports:

- Demonstration and pilot projects that test innovative environmental solutions
- Projects that can be replicated or scaled up in other regions or countries
- Actions directly related to soil protection, restoration, and sustainable land use

Unlike Horizon Europe, LIFE often supports smaller projects and even single applicants, although partnerships are also welcome. It's well-suited if you have an innovative solution that offers environmental benefits like improving soil health, reducing pollution, or enhancing biodiversity and that is ready to be demonstrated or deployed on a real scale.

Funding rates in LIFE vary, but generally cover up to 60% of eligible costs, and sometimes more for priority projects.

In the next module, we'll look at how to find the right calls within these programmes to discover opportunities that fit your business.
Thank you for joining me and see you in the next video!

Module 3 – Finding the Right EU Calls

Objective: Teach how to find and understand open EU funding opportunities.

- How to use the EU Funding & Tenders Portal
- Tips for reading calls: scope, expected outcomes, TRLs
- Thematic focus on soil, biowaste, and circular economy

Script

Welcome back to the BIN2BEAN training series on accessing and applying for public funding and grants! In this module, we'll focus on how to find the right funding opportunities for your business.
Even the best project idea needs to fit the right funding opportunity. Applying to the wrong call can waste time and resources or simply result in a rejection because your project doesn't match what the European Commission is looking for.
Let's start with the main tool for finding EU funding opportunities: the **EU Funding & Tenders Portal.** This portal is the official platform where all European Commission calls for proposals are published. You can search for open or upcoming calls, find details about rules, deadlines, and documents and eventually submit your proposals online. The portal is available in English, and it's completely free to use.
To use the portal effectively, you should first:

- Go to the **Funding & Tenders Portal website.**
- Then click on Funding > Call for proposals
- You can now look for calls that match your project by using keywords related to your sector. If you're working in the biowaste-to-soil improvers field, there are some keywords that are especially useful when searching for funding opportunities., such as:
  - Soil health and soil restoration
  - Circular bioeconomy
  - Sustainable agriculture
  - Waste valorisation and recycling
  - Nature-based solutions
  - Biowaste
- You can also filter by:
  - Programme name, like Horizon Europe or CBE-JU
  - Type of action, such as RIA or IA
  - Status: open, closed, or forthcoming calls

When you find a call, click on it to read the full details.

Once you've opened a call on the EU Funding & Tenders Portal, you'll see quite a lot of information. Taking the time to read and understand the call text in detail is one of the most important steps in preparing a successful application.
Let's go through the key sections you should focus on and what they really mean.

In the topic description, the first thing you'll see is the "**expected outcomes**" section. It describes what the EU expects the funded projects to achieve. It's not just about your activities—it's about the results and impacts your project will deliver.
When reading expected outcomes, ask yourself:

- Can my project deliver these results?
- How can I demonstrate my solution's benefits in measurable ways?

Your proposal should explicitly show how it will contribute to these expected outcomes, affecting the score you will received under the "impact" section, as we'll see in the upcoming modules.
Just after the "expected outcome", you can find the "**scope**" which explains exactly what the European Commission wants to fund under this call. Think of it as the problem statement or the area where the Commission wants new solutions and ask yourself:

- Does my idea fit this topic precisely?
- Am I addressing the challenges described in the scope?

If your project only partially fits the scope, it might not be a good idea to apply, because your proposal could be rejected as out of scope or, in the best-case scenario, it can affect negatively your score in the Excellence section, as we'll see in the upcoming modules.
Additionally, look for **keywords** in the call text. Terms like "circular economy," "soil health," "bioeconomy," or "climate-neutral solutions" are clues about what reviewers expect. Use similar language in your proposal to show alignment with the call.
Another critical aspect to check within each call is the **Technology Readiness Level** (or TRL) that the innovation is supposed to reach at the end of the project. TRLs describe how advanced your technology or solution is, ranging from basic research to market-ready products. This may not always be mentioned explicitly in the text of the call, but it is usually implicit in the type of action that we saw in the previous module. For example, RIA projects should achieve a TRL around 5, while IA projects should achieve 7. Flagship projects, which are more characteristics of CBE-JU, should achieve 8-9. Make sure your project is at the right TRL for the call you're targeting. Otherwise, it can be considered out of scope or receive a lower evaluation.
Finally, always note the deadline for submission and plan backwards. It is usually included in the "general information" for each call. Do not forget to download the **official documents** linked to the call, like the Work Programme or specific guidelines. They often contain crucial details, such as the expected budget for each project under a specific call and possible variations from funding rates or eligibility conditions.
In the next videos, we'll move forward and learn how to write a winning proposal. See you in the next module!

Module 4 – Writing a Winning Proposal (Part 1): Excellence & Relevance

Objective: Focus on the technical and scientific part of the proposal.

- Key sections of a typical EU proposal (excellence, impact, implementation)
- Aligning your idea with the call scope
- Drafting objectives and methodology
- Highlighting innovation and EU-added value
- Success factors and common mistakes

Script:
Hello and welcome back to the BIN2BEAN training series on accessing and applying for public funding and grants. In this module, we'll start exploring how to write a winning proposal.
Writing a good proposal is not only about describing your idea. It's about convincing evaluators that your project is the best choice for EU funding. For this reason, it's important not to underestimate the time and effort this takes. Ideally, you should start working on your proposal about two months before the call deadline and even earlier if you need to build your consortium from scratch.
Most EU proposals are made up of two main parts.

- **First, there's Part A.** This is the administrative section. It's a series of online forms in the Funding & Tenders Portal. Here, you'll enter details about your organisation, the people involved, budgets, and other formal information.
- **Then there's Part B,** which is the narrative part of your proposal. This is the most important section and will take the most time and effort to prepare. Even though the structure of Part B is similar across many EU calls, always download the specific template for each call from the Funding & Tenders Portal. Part B also has a page limit, which usually depends on the type of action. You'll find the exact limit in the instructions at the start of the template. Be careful: if your proposal is too long, any extra pages will automatically become invisible after the deadline and evaluators won't read them. Finally, remember that Part B must be uploaded as a PDF in the F&T portal, following the template exactly for the specific topic or call you're applying to.

Part B is organised into three main sections, which correspond to the key evaluation criteria used by EU evaluators. These are:

- **Excellence,** which describes the scientific and technical quality of your project.
- **Impact,** which shows how your project will benefit society, the economy, or the environment.
- **Implementation,** which explains how you'll carry out the project, including timelines, partners, and budget.

In this module, we'll focus on how to build the **Excellence section** of your proposal, which is where you show:

- Why your project matters
- How it fits the call you're applying for
- What makes your solution innovative and relevant for Europe
- And that the proposed methodology, including the concepts and assumptions, is sound.

Let's break this down further.
In the excellence section, first, you'll need to clearly define your **project's objectives**. Ask yourself: What exactly do you want to achieve? Usually, you'll have one main project objective that summarises your overall concept and several specific objectives that break it down further. Make your objectives measurable, with clear, realistic, and verifiable indicators or KPIs. And always link them to the goals of the call. You will also need to demonstrate what makes your project innovative: What new knowledge, technologies, or solutions are you developing? How does your project go beyond the current state of the art?

Following project objectives, you will need to explain your **methodology.** This is where you show how you'll achieve your objectives. Describe:

- Your scientific and technical approach

- Methods and tools you'll use
- And why these methods are the best choice to achieve your results

It's also important to show how your project will include interdisciplinary approaches, appropriate gender considerations in research and innovation content, high-quality open science practices, like sharing data and research outputs, and, where appropriate, the engagement of citizens, civil society, or end users.
Summing up, writing the Excellence section can be challenging. Here are a few **common mistakes** to avoid:

- Being too vague or generic. Avoid buzzwords without explaining what they mean.
- Not clearly linking your project to the specific scope of the call.
- Failing to explain how your solution improves on what already exists.
- Forgetting to highlight the European dimension of your project and how it benefits Europe as a whole.
- Ignoring the requests in the official template. Always read it carefully and answer every question it includes.
- Not checking if the template has been updated for your specific call. Always download the latest version from the Funding & Tenders Portal.

For this module, we have prepared a writing checklist to guide you through the key points you need to cover. I encourage you to download it and keep it handy as you work on your proposal.
In the next module, we'll continue with the Impact section, see you in the next video!

Module 5 – Writing a Winning Proposal (Part 2): Impact

Objective: Focus on how to write the impact section

- Market uptake, scalability, and socio-environmental impact
- Measures to maximise the impact
- Success factors and common mistakes to avoid

Script:
Hello and welcome back to the BIN2BEAN training series on accessing and applying for public funding and grants. In this module, we'll continue learning how to write a winning proposal, focusing on the Impact section.
Writing a strong proposal isn't only about technical innovation—it's also about showing how your project will make a real difference. Let's have a look at how this can be achieved within the Impact section, where you explain how your project's results will make a difference beyond the immediate scope and duration of your work.
A good place to begin is with the expected outcomes listed in the call text. Look at those outcomes and describe how your project will contribute to achieving them.
Then, go further and talk about wider impacts in the longer term, as specified in the destination part of the Work Programme. For example, how will your project help Europe achieve goals like the Green Deal, the circular economy, or soil health targets?
When describing impact, don't focus only on the scientific side. Evaluators also want to see:

- Economic and technological impacts. For example, how your innovation might bring new products or services to the market, reduce costs, or improve efficiency in industry.
- And societal impacts. Such as improving environmental protection, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, creating new jobs, or supporting rural communities.

It's important to quantify your impact wherever possible. Use numbers, forecasts, or concrete examples, defining your Key Performance Indicators, or KPIs. KPIs help evaluators see how you'll measure the success of your project. They show that you've thought through how to track progress and results. For instance, you could estimate the number of hectares of soil that could be restored with the innovation you are proposing or the percentage reduction in biowaste going to landfill.
Another key part of the Impact section is explaining your **measures to maximise impact.**
This means describing how you'll:

- Disseminate your results, for example by publishing scientific papers, attending conferences, or engaging with networks and stakeholders.
- Communicate your project to the broader public. Explain in simple terms what your project does, why it matters, and who benefits from it. Plan communication from the start and tailor your messages for different audiences.
- Exploit your results, which is about how you or your partners will use the project outcomes after the funding ends. This could involve launching new products, licensing technology, or filing patents. Even if your project isn't purely commercial, evaluators want to know how your work will create value and continue beyond the project's lifetime.

Rember: also in this case, quantifying the outputs and using KPIs are key!
Before closing this module, let's quickly review **common mistakes** people make in the Impact section:

- Writing statements without numbers or evidence. Be as quantitative as possible!
- Focusing only on scientific impacts and overlooking social, economic or environmental contributions
- Forgetting about the importance of a solid and quantitative plan for dissemination, exploitation, and communication
- Not showing how the project connects to broader EU policies and goals, including work programme destinations
- And, finally, forgetting to check the call requirements and proposal template and answer all its specific questions

In the next module, we'll continue with the Implementation section. Do not forget to download our writing checklist before moving on. See you in the next video!

Module 6 – Writing a Winning Proposal (Part 3): Implementation

Objective: Focus on how to write the implementation section

- Work packages, roles, timelines, and risk management
- Success factors and common mistakes to avoid

Script:
Hello and welcome back to the BIN2BEAN training series on accessing and applying for public funding and grants. This module will close our session on how to write a winning proposal with a focus on the Implementation section.
A strong Implementation section shows evaluators that your project is feasible and well planned. You need to prove that your project idea can be turned into reality. Evaluators look at how your work is organised, who will do what, how long it will take, and whether you've thought through potential risks. Let's go through the main parts you'll need to include.

First, you'll need a clear **work plan.** Your project should be broken down into **work packages.** A work package is a group of related tasks that help you unfold your project methodology and achieve your project objectives. It describes the practical steps you'll take, while the theories and techniques behind the activities belong to the Excellence section. Work packages are indeed more operational and shows:

- Which activities, or tasks, you're going to carry out.
- Who will be responsible for that
- How long each task will take. The use of a GANTT chart to show when different tasks and work packages will be carried out is also recommended.

Make sure also that your work packages cover the entire scope of your project and connect logically to one another. An initial representation on how WPs fit together (PERTT chart) is requested at the beginning of the Implementation section.
Each work package should clearly state:

- The overall objective of the WP
- When it starts and when it ends
- The effort in terms of Person Months
- Who is going to lead it. WP leaders are responsible for the implementation of their WP and are the main contacts in case of problems/questions or decisions to make within the WP. They are supported by task leaders which are responsible for organising activities within their task and ensuring that outputs are delivered on time. Assigning the right partner for the right role is essential to guide the future project and to show evaluators that you have the right skills and capacity to deliver the project.

For each WP, you'll also need to define **milestones** and **deliverables.**
Let's clarify the difference:

- Milestones are control points in your project. They help you check progress and decide if you're ready to move on to the next phase—for example, completing a prototype or finishing field trials.
- Deliverables are tangible outputs you produce during the project. These might include reports, technical documents, software, prototypes, or policy recommendations. Deliverables are specific results you submit to the European Commission as proof of your progress.

So, in short, milestones mark significant points along the way, while deliverables are the concrete results you produce. Both are used by the funding agency and by the reviewers to check your advancements through the project. Make sure that they are realistic and achievable by the set deadline!
An important part of Implementation is also showing how you'll handle risks.
Every project has risks, and evaluators expect you to identify them.
For each significant risk, explain:

- What might go wrong
- How likely it is to happen
- And what steps you'll take to reduce the impact if it does

For example, you might have technical risks, like challenges in scaling up your biowaste processing technology, or external risks, such as changes in regulations.
Finally, do not forget to highlight the role and capacity of each participant and how the consortium as a whole brings together all the necessary expertise.

Let's finish with some **common mistakes** in the Implementation section:

- Structuring your work plan in an illogical or incohesive manner that it is not aligned to the project methodology.
- Describing the theories and techniques behind your activities. This should be described in the Methodology section, don't mix the two!
- A common mistake is also spending too much time describing the Implementation section in great detail, while neglecting the Excellence and Impact sections.
- Other mistakes include: Creating overlapping tasks without a clear indication of roles and responsibilities.
- Defining milestones and deliverables that are not realistic or aligned with the project structure
- Ignoring the need for a clear risk assessment
- Forgetting to show how your partners complement each other

With this video, we've completed our journey through Part B of the proposal, covering Excellence, Impact, and Implementation. In our next video, we'll move into the financial side. See you in the next module!

Module 7 – Financial Planning in EU Projects

Objective: Introduce the basics of budgeting and eligible costs.

- Budget categories: personnel, travel, subcontracting, etc.
- Tools and templates

Script

Hello and welcome back to the BIN2BEAN training series on accessing and applying for public funding and grants. This module will focus on how to plan your project budget and understand eligible costs.

Once you've defined your project idea and planned your activities, you'll need to translate all of that into numbers.

The budget isn't just a formality, it's how you prove that your project is affordable, feasible, and compliant with EU rules. A well-prepared budget can make your proposal stronger and help avoid surprises during the project.

So, let's have a quick look at how to build a clear and credible budget for your EU project.

Personnel costs are often the largest part of your budget. They cover salaries for the people working on the project, including employees, natural persons working under a direct contract, SME owners not receiving a salary, volunteers. Depending on the type of personnel cost, they must be declared as actual, meaning costs actually incurred by the beneficiary during the action duration, or unit costs. In EU projects, personnel time is measured in **person-months.** But what does that mean? A person-month represents one person working full-time for one month on the project. So, for example:

- If a researcher works full-time for 3 months on the project, that equals 3 person-months.
- If someone works half-time for 6 months, that's also 3 person-months.

This way of calculating effort helps evaluators understand how much time each partner plans to dedicate and whether your resources are sufficient for the tasks you've proposed

Then we have **Subcontracting costs**. These are used when you need to outsource specific tasks to external partners who are not part of your consortium. For instance, specialised lab tests or independent evaluations. Remember, however, that subcontracting should only cover tasks that your consortium cannot do internally. The core work of the project should stay within the partners. When choosing a subcontractor, it is important to apply the principles of best value for money.
Next are **purchase costs**, which include travel, equipment and other goods, works and services. Travel costs cover expenses like transport, accommodation, and daily allowances for meetings, conferences, or site visits. Always make sure the purpose of the travel is clearly linked to the project activities.
For equipment, you can usually only claim part of the cost that matches how much you actually use it for your project, taking into account both the depreciation period and the percentage of time it's used specifically for your project work.
Finally, other goods, works and services (OGWS) include consumables and supplies, dissemination and communication costs (such as publication fees and conferences fees), and costs related to intellectual property rights.
Finally, the beneficiaries/affiliated entities may charge costs under 'Other cost categories', including Financial Support to third parties and internally invoiced goods, but the eligibility of these costs will vary depending on the call.
All the above-mentioned costs, excluding subcontracting and other cost categories, contribute to **indirect costs** which are calculated as a flat rate of the direct eligible cost. The flat rate is usually fixed at 7% or 25% depending on the program.
If you think that these names are too many and overwhelming, the good news is you don't have to figure everything out on your own. The European Commission provides several tools to help you, including the **Annotated Grant Agreement (AGA)** which explains the rules in detail, with examples and practical guidance. It can be used when preparing the proposal but also for reporting once the project is funded. I strongly recommend downloading the AGA and keeping it as a reference during both proposal preparation and project management. You can find it as a supplementary material for this module.

When preparing your proposal, remember that your budget must be entered directly into the Funding & Tenders Portal.
However, there's also a more detailed budget breakdown in the Implementation section of Part B of your proposal.
There, you'll find tables where you should:

- Allocate costs to different work packages
- Show how many person-months are planned for each partner
- Provide explanations for significant costs, like subcontracting or large purchases

These details help evaluators see whether your budget matches your work plan and whether your resources are sufficient for the project.

Before closing this module, it's also important to understand how **cost reporting works.**
In traditional projects, you report your actual costs. This means:

- Declaring the real expenses you've paid, such as salaries, invoices, and travel tickets
- Keeping detailed records to prove that your costs were necessary and linked to your project activities

However, many EU programmes are now moving towards the lump sum model.
In a lump sum project:

- Instead of reporting every individual cost, you receive a fixed amount for completing specific project tasks or deliverables
- You don't have to provide invoices or financial proofs for every expense, but you must show that the work was truly carried out

Lump sums reduce administrative burden but require careful planning so that your fixed payment covers all real costs.
Within the Funding & Tenders portal, each call will provide indications on whether the project will follow a standard or lump sum reporting to allow you to plan the budget accordingly.

After discussing how EU proposals work, in our next video, we'll explore how to find **national and regional funding opportunities** that could also support your biowaste-to-soil innovations.
See you in the next module!

Module 8 – National and Regional Funding: Where and How to Look

Objective: Provide a strategy for navigating national/regional funding.

- Overview of where to look: NCPs, regional innovation agencies, Enterprise Europe Network
- EU-cofinanced national programmes (e.g. CAP, ERDF, LIFE)
- Tips to stay informed: newsletters, platforms, intermediaries

Script
Hello and welcome back to the BIN2BEAN training series on accessing and applying for public funding and grants. In this module, we'll explore how to find funding opportunities at national and regional levels—an important complement to EU funding, especially for businesses working in the biowaste-to-soil improvers sector.
While EU programmes are significant sources of funding, they're not the only options available.
National and regional funding programmes can:

- Provide smaller but faster grants
- Support projects that are not yet ready for large EU calls
- Fund activities tailored to your country's specific priorities
- And finally help businesses test innovative solutions locally before scaling up to EU level

So, where should you start looking for this funding? Although we will not be able to explore in detail all the available national and regional funding, let's look at a few key sources that will help you navigate through these opportunities!
National Contact Points, or NCPs, are one of your first stops.
Every EU country has NCPs who can:

- Explain national programmes and how they connect to EU funding
- Help you navigate application processes
- Provide updates about local opportunities

Especially if you're new to public funding, NCPs can save you time and help you avoid mistakes.
Another great resource is **regional innovation agencies.**

Many regions across Europe have dedicated agencies that:

- Manage funding programmes aligned with local economic and environmental goals
- Provide guidance on writing applications
- Support connections between businesses, researchers, and local authorities

For example, if your region has a strong focus on circular economy or sustainable agriculture, these agencies might have funding specifically for projects like transforming biowaste into soil improvers.

The **Enterprise Europe Network, or EEN** may also come in help. EEN is a vast network that helps small and medium-sized enterprises to:

- Find partners for research or business collaborations
- Learn about both EU and national funding opportunities
- Understand market trends and regulations

Many EEN advisors focus on sustainability, environmental technologies, and the bioeconomy—all relevant to biowaste-to-soil innovators.

Apart from purely national or regional funding, there's also funding that combines **EU money with national management.** These are called **EU-co-financed programmes.**

A few examples relevant for your sector include:

- The **Common Agricultural Policy (CAP),** which funds sustainable farming and soil health initiatives. Many Member States run rural development grants that could support new soil improvers derived from biowaste.
- And the **European Regional Development Fund (ERDF),** which funds projects that boost regional competitiveness, including environmental technologies and circular economy solutions.

These programmes are managed locally, but they connect directly to European priorities—so they're a great opportunity if your project has both local and EU-level benefits.

However, one challenge with national and regional funding is that calls can open and close quickly, and they're often not as visible as big EU programmes. So, staying informed is key.

Some practical tips include:

- Signing up for newsletters from your national ministries, regional development agencies, and NCPs.
- Checking the websites of regional innovation agencies regularly, especially if your region has policies focused on sustainability, soil health, or waste management.
- Staying connected to networks like EEN or bioeconomy industry associations—they often share funding alerts and partner searches.
- And finally, attending local events, workshops, or info days. These are excellent places to hear about new calls and meet people who could become partners in your project.

To help you start your search, we've prepared a **list of useful links and contacts** where you can explore national and regional funding opportunities relevant for the biowaste-to-soil sector. Make sure to download these resources—they're a great starting point.

Before closing our course, in our next video, we'll focus on specific EU calls and programmes dedicated to **soil health**, which is a key innovation area for biowaste-to-soil projects. See you in the next module!

Module 9 – EU Programmes & Calls for Soil Health

Objective: Present EU initiatives specifically supporting soil-related innovation.

- EU Mission "A Soil Deal for Europe"
- Horizon Europe Cluster 6
- LIFE projects on soil restoration and circular bioeconomy

Script

Hello and welcome to this final module of the BIN2BEAN training series on accessing and applying for public funding and grants.
Today we'll close our journey together by focusing on EU calls and programmes dedicated to innovations in the biowaste-to-soil improvers sector, with a focus on soil health.
Throughout this course, we've talked about how public funding can help you transform innovative ideas into market-ready solutions. Now, we'll look at where you can specifically find opportunities if your work involves converting biowaste into soil improvers—an area that sits at the heart of Europe's strategies for sustainability, circular economy, and soil health.
The European Union places increasing importance on:

- Soil health, because healthy soils are essential for food security, biodiversity, and climate resilience.
- Circular economy, to reduce waste and transform by-products into valuable resources.

For businesses working on biowaste-to-soil improvers, this creates a unique funding opportunity. Your projects are perfectly positioned to:

- Reduce landfill waste
- Restore degraded soils
- Create sustainable products for agriculture and environmental protection

Many EU funding programmes now explicitly target these objectives.
Earlier in this course, we introduced key programmes like Horizon Europe and the LIFE Programme.
In this final module, we won't repeat those general explanations. Instead, we'll dive deeper into how these programmes connect specifically to biowaste-to-soil projects, and how you can position your innovations to align with these funding priorities.
A particularly relevant programme is the **Mission "A Soil Deal for Europe."**
This Mission aims to ensure healthy soils across Europe by 2030, through innovation, new business models, and practical solutions that can be implemented in real-world contexts.
And it's important to know that BIN2BEAN itself was funded under this Mission Soil context.
Our project was selected because it contributes to:

- Transforming biowaste into sustainable products
- Improving soil health and fertility
- Demonstrating solutions that can be scaled up across Europe

This shows how soil health is not just a political priority—it's an area where concrete funding decisions are already supporting real projects.
If you're looking for calls that focus on biowaste-to-soil projects:

- Check the Work Programmes of Horizon Europe Cluster 6 for calls linked to soil health, waste valorisation, and circular bioeconomy.
- Explore the LIFE Programme for topics on soil restoration, landfill reduction, and pilot projects demonstrating environmental benefits.

- Look into the CBE JU for funding bio-based value chains where biowaste is transformed into innovative products like soil improvers.
- Don't forget national or regional programmes under CAP or ERDF that support sustainable soil management and circular economy solutions.

When reading call texts:

- Pay close attention to the expected outcomes
- Check the required TRL
- And make sure your project fits precisely into the scope

Remember: the EU is particularly interested in projects that combine environmental impact with economic viability. That's a perfect match for the biowaste-to-soil sector.

With this video, we're concluding our BIN2BEAN training on how to access and apply for public funding and grants.
But keep in mind, public funding is only one part of your financing journey.
That's why, in the BIN2BEAN series, we'll also have a dedicated training on **Corporate Financing for New and Existing SMEs.**
Combining public and private financing can give you the resources you need to bring your biowaste-to-soil innovations to the market and scale them successfully. So, I invite you to continue your learning journey with us.
And one last thing—don't forget to take the quiz at the end of this course! Completing it will give you a certificate of participation, a great way to demonstrate your commitment and strengthen your professional profile in the biowaste sector.

Thank you for following this training series on accessing and applying for public funding and grants.
I wish you great success in turning your biowaste-to-soil innovations into market realities.
See you in the next BIN2BEAN training!

References

There is no single official Horizon Europe writing guide. The present training course is therefore based on the combination of different materials provided by the European Commission and other funding programmes. Main reference documents include:

- Horizon Europe Programme Guide: Link
- EU funding and tenders portal IT Tool: Link
- EU F&T portal online manual: Link
- Horizon Europe Work Programmes: Link
- Horizon Europe General Annexes: Link
- CBE-JU Annual Work Programme: Link
- LIFE Programme on CINECA website: Link
- General application form: Link
- General evaluation form: Link
- Information provided by NCPS such as: APRE
- Specific NCPs or national/regional calls as reported in the additional material for Module 8