

GUIDELINES

FOR THE OPEN INNOVATION
IN SCIENCE PLATFORM
PLANT2FOOD

CALL ROUND 2025



PLANT2FOOD

A Novo Nordisk Foundation Sponsored Initiative

BACKGROUND

Plant2Food is a 5-year (2023-2027) funding and research programme. It offers a collaboration platform for researchers and companies who want to collaborate in precompetitive research projects to solve some of the complex problems of developing tasty, nutritious, and sustainable plant-based foods.

Plant2Food will accelerate the transition to more sustainable, plant-based foods, which are healthy for both the planet and its population, by building a leading hub for plant-based foods research and innovation.

The Novo Nordisk Foundation (NNF) has awarded Plant2Food with up to 200 M DKK to establish the platform, facilitate co-creation of novel research projects, and provide funding for the academic component of joint initiatives between academia and industry partners from the AgriFood Sector.

Plant2Food is an Open Innovation in Science platform focusing on open research collaboration. This means that the universities and companies joining the platform agree to publish all results from the open research projects as soon as possible and waive any claim to intellectual property rights. The ongoing sharing of results and knowledge will enable researchers and companies to accelerate innovation/development activities and the transition towards a more plant-based diet. As no one can patent the foreground knowledge and open results from the projects, anyone is free to further develop the results and potentially use them for commercial purposes downstream.

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have any questions regarding these Guidelines, the matchmaking, ideation or application process, you are always welcome to contact the Plant2Food secretariat:

 Plant2Food@au.dk

Plant2Food
Ny Munkegade 120
8000 Aarhus C
Denmark

Guidelines 2025
Plant2Food is a Novo Nordisk Foundation sponsored initiative

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These guidelines describe the process for the 2025 call round in Plant2Food.

For potential future call rounds, changes may be introduced.

You can find the current version of this guideline folder on our online community hosted by WorldLabs:

www.worldlabs.org/plant2food under 'Resources'



1. SCIENTIFIC SCOPE

Plant2Food facilitates and supports precompetitive and interdisciplinary research projects that are inspired by industry needs, challenges, and ideas.

The aim is to build a collaborative ecosystem of academic, knowledge-, research-, and technology organizations as well as industry stakeholders that can co-create projects within plant and food sciences.

Together, the stakeholders will develop shared research projects and a public knowledge base that will lead to an increased consumption of tasty, nutritious, and sustainable plant-based foods.

THE MAIN RESEARCH AREAS WITHIN THE PLANT2FOOD SCOPE:

PLANT RAW MATERIAL

Project proposals in this domain must target the needs of later stages in the value chain, e.g., in relation to food quality parameters, such as nutrition, functionality, processing- and sensory qualities, and may include:

- Addressing effects of crop genotype, environment, and management interactions on food quality parameters.
- Linking specific plant genes, metabolites, and proteins to food quality parameters.
- Genetic improvement of crop traits related to food quality parameters.

REFINERY & PROCESSING

Project proposals in this domain must deliver knowledge and technological solutions that optimize the nutritional, functional and sensory qualities of plant raw materials towards high food quality, and may include:

- New, improved or more gentle production routes for both primary and secondary processing and bioprocessing.
- Understanding and development of new technologies and methods to improve the nutritional, functional, and sensory qualities of plant raw materials for plant-based foods.
- Routes to valorise underutilised resources from primary or secondary production side streams.

FOOD & HEALTH

Project proposals in this domain should deliver new insights that are broadly applicable, rather than focusing on improving specific products. Focus is on knowledge related to safety, toxicity, bioavailability, and shelf-life of plant-based raw material and foods, and may include:

- Improving safety and shelf-stability aspects of plant-based proteins and foods.
- Characterizing and improving bioavailability of macro- and micronutrients.
- Assessing and improving nutritional and health credentials of plant-based foods.

SCIENTIFIC SCOPE CONTINUED

FOCUS ON TERRESTRIAL CROPS, PRODUCTION, AND FOOD APPLICATIONS

Plant2Food focus on plant raw material from terrestrial crops, e.g., cereals, grain legumes, vegetables, fruits, berries, nuts, seeds, fungi, and oil crops, for either direct consumption, raw materials, ingredients, foods, or drinks. Seaweed and microalgae can be included as plant raw material in Plant2Food projects to a limited extent, but the main focus must always be on terrestrial crops. Plant production using e.g. controlled-environment agriculture (CEA), including vertical farming, greenhouse production, and indoor agriculture, is within scope.

Results from Plant2Food projects can have many potential food applications and for example be used by food manufacturers in combination with animal sources (hybrid products), but the main purpose of such projects must not be the design of plant-based components for hybrid products.

INCLUSION OF THE ENTIRE VALUE CHAIN

While pure social-science projects (e.g. consumer behavior) are not in scope, projects should strive to involve all relevant stakeholders. For larger projects in particular, social science elements can add significant value in e.g. identifying bottlenecks for market uptake of new types of foods. Where appropriate, primary producers and end-users should be involved in project execution to ensure that ultimate products and solutions will be accepted and implemented.

FOCUS ON INNOVATION AND CO-CREATION

Strong collaborations between industry and academia are core values at Plant2Food.

Projects should strive to emphasize how the project is a result of co-creation between researchers and company representatives - e.g. by solving a particular industry problem.

Moreover, projects should emphasize how the project is innovative and can lead to short and/or long term innovation and value for not only the involved industry partner(s), but to a wider target.

REFLECTIONS ON SUSTAINABILITY

While a more plant-based diet in itself can be considered sustainable, applicants must also consider how their projects can respect planetary boundaries. Plant2Food encourages you to design your project sustainably with respect to the environment, climate, biodiversity, resource use, and gentle production methods.

PLANT2FOOD DOES NOT SUPPORT PROJECTS WITHIN

- Feed
- Livestock
- Dairy
- Insects
- Artificial meat/cell-based meat
- Precision fermentation
- Marine aquaculture

2. HOW TO SET YOUR TEAM

Plant2Food projects must have participants from both academia and industry to be eligible. All projects must include at least one company partner and one university partner. The parties co-create the project application and co-execute the research project, if granted.

SETTING THE TEAM:

WHO CAN RECEIVE FUNDING?

Only not-for-profit parties are eligible to receive funding from Plant2Food.

WHO CAN BE MAIN APPLICANT?

The main applicant must be tenured or tenure-tracked researchers from one of the four partner universities:

- Aarhus University (AU)
- Technological University of Denmark (DTU)
- University of Copenhagen (UCPH)
- Wageningen University & Research (WUR)

WHO CAN BE PART OF THE PROJECT APPLICATION?

- Researchers from the four partner universities.
- Any interested company*.
- Researchers from non-partner universities and knowledge institutions (see below)
- Non-profit organizations.

INCLUDING RESEARCHERS FROM NON-PARTNER UNIVERSITIES/KNOWLEDGE INSTITUTIONS

A main applicant from a partner university can include researchers from non-partner universities/research institutions in a Plant2Food application (i.e. institutions different from the four partner universities). In order for the researchers to be part of the application (with a share of the budget), the researchers' host institutions must accept and be able to comply with Plant2Food's open approach to e.g. IP, collaboration, and publishing. Use the Declaration of Open Participation for this purpose. Find it on WorldLabs under 'Resources'. As all other parties, the non-partner universities must sign the non-negotiable Project Agreement if the project application is awarded funding.

INDUSTRY PARTNERS

In Plant2Food, companies and university researchers co-create and co-execute research projects based on needs, challenges, and ideas derived from the partners. The projects must address generic challenges that are shared by many companies – either within a certain link of the value chain or across links. Projects thus cannot focus on needs or challenges that are specific to a single company.

University researchers cannot propose or be part of research projects with their own spinout companies as the sole or main beneficiaries of the project's results.

The Project Agreement is the same for all Plant2Food projects and is based on the principles of openness agreed upon by the four partner universities and company partners in the overall programme application for the NNF. The Project Agreement is available for download on WorldLabs under 'Resources'.

* Companies cannot receive funding due to the NNF's rules of only supporting not-for-profit organizations.

3. IDEATION & APPLICATION PROCESS



JOIN OUR COMMUNITY ONLINE

Researchers and company representatives must sign up to our online community hosted by WorldLabs. Here, you can create a profile for yourself, your research group, or your company, showcasing your interests and competencies. You can upload ideas and challenges for new projects, look for partners, give input to other ideas, and browse through our many events. A profile will make it easier for potential collaboration partners to find you. You also apply for funding on our online community.



JOIN INFORMATION MEETING AND OTHER EVENTS

Each call round is launched with an information meeting. Join to learn about the aim and scope of Plant2Food, terms for the specific call round, and details of the ideation and application process. Plant2Food hosts several events during the call round where you can ideate and find potential project partners. All events are published on the online community and our website.



SHARE YOUR PROJECT IDEAS

If you have an idea for a research project within the Plant2Food scope, you can showcase it on our community. As openness is a vital element in Plant2Food, applicants are advised to upload ideas before developing it into a full project application. Share your idea on the WorldLabs Marketplace.



FIND COLLABORATORS

Meet your new partners in person. Good connections between collaborators are essential. While virtual matchmaking can take you some of the way, we would like to offer you a chance to network in person. Join us at one of our physical events, where the Plant2Food team facilitates a day of sharing ideas and finding partners – perhaps even from non-obvious sources.



REACH OUT IF YOU NEED HELP

Need more help finding the right idea, project or partner? Contact the Plant2Food secretariat. We can help you find the right partner or guide you to bring your competencies in play in the right project. Plant2Food has a network of skilled ambassadors within the four partner universities and core industry partners as well. They can help you in the process.



TRANSLATE YOUR IDEA INTO A PROJECT APPLICATION

When you are set with a good idea and the right team to match it, you and your partners from industry and academia must collaborate to translate the idea into a Plant2Food research project, where all project partners play an active role. We particularly advise you and your team to familiarize yourselves with the application templates and contact the relevant business developer. (Contact information on p. 8) If in doubt, contact the Plant2Food secretariat.



SUBMIT YOUR APPLICATION

Submit your application on our online community, WorldLabs. For direct link to the application site, [click here](#).

4. PRECOMPETITIVE PROJECTS

WHAT MAKES A PROJECT PRECOMPETITIVE?

The key to finding out whether a project is precompetitive is dialogue between the project partners. Questions to be discussed are:

- What is the nature of the problem the research project aims to solve?
- Is it closely linked to confidential stages of a company's innovation processes, or can it be addressed at a much earlier and more generic stage where other companies can be easily included – and where the output can be put to many different uses afterwards?

EXPLORE THE CASE EXAMPLES FOR PRECOMPETITIVE CHALLENGES

Based on discussions between main applicants and university business developers, the Plant2Food business developers have prepared five case examples that highlight precompetitive aspects to be considered when defining precompetitive research ideas.

Explore the case examples [here](#).

CONTACT YOUR LOCAL BUSINESS DEVELOPER

The Plant2Food secretariat and the local business developer at the partner universities will assist potential applicants with identifying the precompetitive aspects of their ideas.

It is the responsibility of the main applicant to make sure that the proposed research and results are precompetitive and that the output can be shared openly without violating historical IP or e.g. licenses on bits of software codes.

Before submitting the project application, the main applicant must contact the local university business developers to discuss the precompetitive nature of the project scope.

The main applicant must have initiated dialogue with the business developer by 17 September 2025.

CONTACT YOUR LOCAL BUSINESS DEVELOPER:

AARHUS UNIVERSITY

Sigurd Koldste - E-mail: sigk@au.dk - Phone: +45 9352 2866

TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY OF DENMARK

Peter Conrad Ottesen - Email: pcot@dtu.dk - Phone: +45 9351 1947

UNIVERSITY OF COPENHAGEN

Niels Lysholm Engelhard - E-mail: nien@adm.ku.dk - Phone: +45 3532 6330

WAGENINGEN UNIVERSITY & RESEARCH

Ruud van den Bulk - Email: ruud.vandenbulk@wur.nl - Phone: +31 317 480 484

5. ELIGIBLE COSTS

IN GENERAL:

The budget must only include costs directly attributable to the project, following the NNF guidelines for eligible project costs. Applicants must aim for cost-effective study designs where the proposed budget is proportionate to the scope, activities, deliverables, and potential impact of the project. In the review process, the Plant2Food governing bodies can choose to make funding recommendations contingent on changes in the budget and study design.

ELIGIBLE COSTS:

- Salaries for scientific and technical personnel for the time dedicated to the project
- Operating expenses
- Minor equipment (up to 200.000 DKK only for Grant Type 1 recipients)
- Conference participation
- Organization of meetings / smaller conferences
- Travel for project activities
- Publication costs (including costs for storage in open databases and open publishing)
- Costs for subcontractors (subcontractors cannot be project partners)
- Direct administrative expenses (5% administration fee) encoded in the budget template
- Bench fee (can be included in the budget for the support of individual researchers to cover expenses needed to conduct the proposed research)
- Technician / TAP (can be included in the budget when illustrated in the project application's item that the technician will be performing specific project tasks)

PLEASE NOTE

- Due to the rules and regulations of the NNF, no funding can be allocated to company partners.
- Due to the Plant2Food period being less than three years, Plant2Food no longer supports PhDs.
- Plant2Food cannot fund salaries for employed personnel if the projects is discontinued by the governing bodies due to e.g. unsatisfactory results.

ELIGIBLE COSTS ELABORATED

SALARIES

Direct salary costs include actual salary costs, calculated on the basis of the annual gross salary, incl. pension, insurance, and holiday pay. Compensation of costs for overtime, sick pay, leave of absence etc. may not be included in the budget. Parental leave follows the rules of the NNF.

Salary may be included in the budget for the following:

- Researchers in time-limited contracts at universities: Full salary (cost price for time spent on project), bench fee, and 5% administration fee.
- Main applicants in time-unlimited contracts that need to secure their own salary from external funds: Maximum two months' salary/year for project management and supervision, bench fee, and 5% administration fee.
- Non-profit organizations: Can apply for projects as co-applicants with a partner university and receive funding similarly to the partner universities (using cost price salaries).

Plant2Food does NOT cover:

- Salary posts that are already covered by existing base salary or any other funding.

Each applicant listed in the project budget must document the approval of the proposed budget by their Head of Department or equivalent as described in the budget template.

APPLICANTS FROM WAGENINGEN UNIVERSITY & RESEARCH

Applicants can apply using their full cost rate model, which is approved and prescribed by the Dutch government. Applicants affiliated at WUR can use the IKS-tariffs for budgeting and project administration for all project active staff, conditioned that they use a standard 15% in-kind contribution from WUR on all personnel-based costs. This is to align with the NNF's regulations on indirect/nonproject related costs. When using this model, the standard 5 % administration fee and bench fee cannot be applied.

BENCH FEE

The fee can constitute a maximum of DKK 8,000 per month per FTE academic employee actively working on the project and may only be used for expenses that are related to the research project, and which cannot be included within another individual budget category. The budget must specify the expenses covered by the bench fee, which may include:

- Common or shared laboratory expenses and consumables
- Laboratory utilities (electricity, gas, water)
- Maintenance of essential equipment
- Service contracts
- Technical- and IT support

The bench fee does not cover rent, administrative support, representation, social contributions, etc. To include a bench fee in the budget, the fee must be a part of the general expense policy of the applicants' institution(s) and it must apply for all employees independently of funding source. To this end, applicants need to include documentation of their bench fee policy as appendice to the project applications/budget.

6. GRANT TYPES

BUDGET SIZE & PROJECT LENGTH

Plant2Food's governing bodies can allocate up to 102 M DKK for research projects within the initiative's first three years (funds for call rounds in the second period will be released upon a positive midterm assessment).

The budget sum available for funding in 2025 is 20.5 M DKK.

APPLICANTS CAN APPLY FOR TWO DIFFERENT GRANT TYPES:

TYPE 1

Purpose: To address complex research problems inspired by unmet industrial needs.

Participants: Min. one partner university, min. one company

Length: Up to 1 year and 10 months.

Budget: 2 - 4 M DKK.

TOP-UP

Purpose: Top-up funding for already funded projects (also outside Plant2Food) to:

- Synergize with each other
- Expand 1-year projects
- Pursue new research/innovation opportunities
- Expand any existing grant with new partners.

Participants: Min. one partner university, min. one company.

Length: Up to 1 year and 10 months.

Budget: Up to 3 M DKK

NB: All projects must be completed within the Plant2Food period, which ends on 31 December 2027.

7. APPLICATION MATERIAL

YOUR CHECKLIST

Please familiarize yourself with the templates well ahead of the submission deadline, as the application process includes steps that require involvement from partners and/or support functions at all project partners' local universities. For example:

- ☐ **MAIN APPLICATION** Template provided
We recommend filling out the application in a document before filling out the application questions on WorldLabs.
- ☐ **CURRICULUM VITAE (CV)**
From the main researchers/employees of each partner university/organization/company. Max. 1 page per person. Upload as one PDF.
- ☐ **LETTER OF SUPPORT** Use template
From each involved company confirming its involvement (and the nature thereof) in the precompetitive and open research activities in the project. Upload as PDF.
- ☐ **DECLARATION OF OPEN PARTICIPATION** (if relevant) Use template
That any participating researchers (outside AU, WUR, DTU, or UCPH) can, in fact, work within the open framework of Plant2Food and comply with its open approach to IP. Upload as PDF.
- ☐ **GANTT CHART** Use template
With work packages and activities for all participants. Upload as Excel and PDF.
- ☐ **BUDGET** Use template
Must be approved and signed by all relevant Heads of Department to ensure that the proposed individual budgets align with local budgeting rules. Upload as Excel and PDF.
- ☐ **DOCUMENTATION FOR CALCULATION OF BENCH FEES**
Budgeted in the application (as appendix to the budget). Upload as PDF.

APPLICATION MATERIAL

FORMALITIES

PSEUDONYMIZATION / USE OF ABBREVIATIONS

It is important that you do not use any personal names anywhere in the application other than in the list of proposers (you will explicitly be asked where to state personal information).

- Instead, we kindly ask you to use abbreviations as listed below:

PROPOSERS FROM PARTNER UNIVERSITIES

Proposers must be employed at one of the partner universities.

Main proposer must be on time-unlimited contract (e.g. associate professor or professor)

P1	Proposer 1	Name of first PI from partner university / Main proposer
P[X]	Proposer [X]	Name of subsequent proposer from partner university

RESEARCHERS TO BE EMPLOYED IN THE PROJECT

Researchers must be employed at a university.

R1	Researcher 1	Name of first researcher participating in the project
R[X]	Researcher [X]	Name of subsequent researcher(s) participating in the project

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

Includes NGOs, GTs, and other knowledge institutions.

O1	Organization 1	Name of first partner from organization participating in the project
O[X]	Organization [X]	Name of subsequent partner(s) from organization participating in the project

COMPANIES

State name of project lead from each participating company.

C1	Company partner 1	Name of first company partner participating in the project
C[X]	Company partner [X]	Name of subsequent company partner(s) participating in the project

8. THE REVIEW PROCESS

THE BIPARTITE REVIEW IN PLANT2FOOD

The review process in Plant2Food consists of two review phases and two separate review organs.

- The two review phases

All submitted applications are reviewed in the first review phase based solely on their abstract and total budget sum. Selection criteria 1-7 form the basis of the review in review phase 1.

After the initial screening based on abstracts by the Review Committee, the better 50-75% of the incoming applications are selected for further review in the second phase. Applications selected for review in the second phase will be reviewed in full length by both the Review Committee and the panel of international specialist reviewers simultaneously.

- Two separate reviewing bodies

The interplay of Plant2Food's two separate reviewing bodies – the Review Committee and the Specialist Review Pool – will ensure a thorough and fair review process. With representatives from both academia and industry, the cross-disciplinary reviewing bodies ensure expertise from different scientific fields and industrial value chains.

The agile process ensures that every proposal will be reviewed by experts regardless of which areas they span. Applicants' personal information is blinded from both reviewing bodies.

PLANT2FOOD'S REVIEW AND GOVERNING ORGANS:

REVIEW COMMITTEE

The Review Committee (RC) consists of representatives from both academia and industry. The RC reviews applications in the two review phases and nominates projects for funding to the Plant2Food Steering Group.

SPECIALIST REVIEWERS

A panel of international specialists review selected applications in full length in the second review phase. Their scores and comments form a crucial foundation for the RC's discussion and final nomination of applications.

STEERING GROUP

The Plant2Food Steering Group makes the final decision on funding.

9. SELECTION CRITERIA

CRITERION	WHAT WILL THE REVIEWERS FOCUS ON?
1. Relevance to the Plant2Food scope	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Does the application fit the Plant2Food scope?
2. Potential for innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Does the project address an unmet need? - Does it have potential for short-term innovation? - Does it have potential for long-term innovation? - Is it likely to deliver research results supporting product development or process innovation in the industry? - Will it open new innovation opportunities for the academic partner(s)?
3. Scientific excellence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Does the project offer novel scientific objectives and/or approaches to obtain the objective compared with state of the art? - Will it create new knowledge? - Is the choice of scientific methodology and technological solutions sound? - Does the application sufficiently explain state of the art and scientific excellence? - Does the project have a competitive edge (scientific and technical level) compared with adjacent technologies?
4. Cross-disciplinarity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Does the project include both academic and industrial partners? - Does the project include relevant partners across scientific disciplines and value chain links? - Does the project application reflect a high level of co-creation between the academic and industry partners?
5. Broadness in value creation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Does the project have sufficient and active industry engagement (with intellectual, material, and/or infrastructural contributions)? - Is the project (and/or the project output) relevant to a broader range of companies than the project partner(s)? - Does the project's concept/output benefit other plant-based projects or research areas?
6. Openness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is the project pre-competitive? - Does the project benefit from being open? - Does the project have a sound plan to openly share its output and results with the public? - Are there any factors in the project design that limits open sharing of output?
7. Feasibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is the project feasible within the timeframe, project plan, budget and with the proposed team?
8. Budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is the budget cost effective? - Is the budget proportionate to project aim, activities and expected output?

SELECTION CRITERIA ELABORATED

1 RELEVANCE TO THE PLANT2FOOD SCOPE:

Projects must be within the scientific scope of Plant2Food, as detailed in section 1.

2 POTENTIAL FOR INNOVATION

Plant2Food projects must be real collaborations between academia and the AgriFood Sector – and they must have the potential to generate the building blocks for subsequent innovations for the industry. Applicants must clearly describe in the project application how the project (e.g. by solving a particular industry problem) can eventually lead to short and/or long term innovation and value for the involved companies (new products, services, processes etc.), the planet, and its population.

The reviewers will look for innovative and value creating aspects in both the application and in the letters of support from company partners. Moreover, they will look for company involvement and co-creation activities in the project as an indicator of the project's potential for innovation.

The support letters and the application's project design must therefore reflect, that the industrial partners are actively engaged in the project – and why. Their motivation for participating their level of commitment and their potential gain will be seen as indicators for the project's innovative potential. In their Letters of Support, company partners must therefore detail their motivation for participating (the value proposition for them) and their contributions to the project. Reviewers will assess the level of industry commitment through e.g. their potential intellectual contributions, active participations in work packages, their contributions in the form of analyses on in-house equipment, and/or by lending materials/technologies to other project participants. Insofar the project can open new opportunities for spin-outs from the universities; applicants should detail this as well.

3 SCIENTIFIC EXCELLENCE

The Review Committee and the specialist reviewers will assess scientific excellence based on classical indicators such as e.g. novelty and quality of approach/objectives, expected output, and competitive strength.

4 CROSS-DISCIPLINARITY

Plant2Food aims to create research projects that address complex problems with the best tools and competencies across disciplines and industries. A central objective for Plant2food is to increase collaboration across plant and food sciences. The reviewers will favor projects that create meaningful collaborations across disciplines and the partnering universities – unlocking new opportunities across the value chain – and projects that actively leverages industry expertise and involvement as part thereof.

SELECTION CRITERIA ELABORATED

5 BROADNESS IN VALUE CREATION

Although Plant2Food projects address research needs that are relevant to the individual companies involved, the projects must not limit their value creation by focusing too narrowly on one company's specific needs or on niche applications. Applications must therefore address generic challenges/research needs that are shared by several companies.

Project applications must always document a strong engagement from industry partners through Letters of Support and project designs that clearly shows their interests, involvement and contributions. Moreover, projects that can demonstrate a meaningful inclusion of e.g. consumer perspectives (for example through collaboration with social sciences and humanities researchers) will often demonstrate value creation for a broader range of stakeholder types.

6 OPENNESS

Plant2Food projects must be "precompetitive". In open projects within other sectors, precompetitive research has often been defined by its Technological Readiness Level (TRL 1-3). Within the area of Plant2Food, however, the TRL scale is less useful as a stand-alone indicator.

As the first of its kind in AgriFood, Plant2Food will need to continuously identify the niche, where companies and universities feel comfortable doing open research and sharing their results with the public.

Generally, precompetitive research projects focus on:

- Generic problems that are relevant to many companies at the same time.
- The results of the open projects are not new products/services – but rather a generic knowledge foundation that can easily be used by companies as building blocks for downstream innovation.
- Data and results can be shared with the public without compromising the companies' ability to adapt the open results for specific, commercial (and protectable) applications.

The reviewers will also assess whether the project is sufficiently open by looking at the types of scientific output, the applicants plan to share, and how they plan to share it. Are there any obstacles that prevents central elements of the projects from being shared with the public? Moreover, the reviewers will look for arguments as to why the project actually benefits from an open set-up (e.g. accelerated discoveries through sharing or collective problem-solving across the value chain).

7 FEASIBILITY

The reviewers will assess whether or not the project is likely to succeed with the proposed aim, approach, team, budget, and timeline.

8 BUDGET

The reviewers will review whether or not the budget is reasonable compared to the project aim, activities, and expected output. The reviewing bodies can suggest changes in budget and project design when nominating projects for funding.

10. IMPORTANT DATES AND DEADLINES

- 1 DIALOGUE WITH LOCAL BUSINESS DEVELOPER** - 17 September 2025
 Before submitting the project application, the main applicant must contact the local university business developers to discuss the precompetitive nature of the project scope. See more on p. 8.
- 2 APPLICATION DEADLINE** - 1 October 2025 23:55
 The Plant2Food secretariat screens all incoming applications for formal requirements (e.g. necessary documents and/or signatures) and mentioning of personal information.
- 3 FIRST REVIEW** - October 2025
 The Review Committee reviews all abstracts on a 1-10 grading scale based on the Plant2Food selection criteria (1-7). Applications with the highest scores are selected for further review in full length. Applications rejected in the first phase will not receive written feedback from the Review Committee.
- 4 SECOND REVIEW** - November 2025
 The Review Committee and the panel of international specialists review the selected applications in full-length using the Plant2Food selection criteria. The Review Committee discusses all reviews in relation to the overall portfolio considerations and makes a preliminary nomination of application.
- 5 CONSULTATION PROCEDURE** - December 2025
 In compliance with the Danish Act of Public Administration, consultancy processes will be implemented for all full-length applications. This is to ensure that applicants are given the opportunity to reply to e.g., new actual information that are brought into the discussion of an application. One week will be allocated for consultative procedures, in which the Plant2Food Secretariat contacts the main applicant by email. Based on the main applicant's reply, the Review Committee decides whether or not to nominate the application for funding.
- 6 FINAL DECISIONS** - January 2026
 The nominated applications are assessed by the members of the Plant2Food Steering Group. The Steering Group makes the final decision on funding.
- 7 DECISION LETTERS** - February 2026
 Plant2Food will send out decision letters to all applicants once the final decision on funding has been made by the Steering Group.

 If awarded funding:
 The Plant2Food secretariat will invite the PI to an introductory meeting with details about terms and conditions and how to initiate the project.
 The project can start as soon as the **Project Agreement** is signed by all project partners.

The Project Agreement has been approved by the four partner universities and representatives from the industry and is non-negotiable.
 The Project Agreement is available for download on WorldLabs under 'Resources'.

11. TERMS & CODE OF CONDUCT

RESEARCH CODE OF CONDUCT

All Projects must comply with the NNF policy for research integrity and -freedom, as well as The Danish Code of Conduct for Research Integrity.

OPEN SHARING

All funded Plant2Food projects are obligated to share their results and data across the network as quickly as possible. They can do this through Plant2Food's website, through relevant databases, and through open publishing in preprint archives and journals - all in accordance with the practices described in the Plant2Food Framework Agreement and in the grant notification for each subproject – incl. explicitly stating support from the NNF (incl. reference of the Plant2Food grant number) in all written and oral presentations of the project. Plant2Food will provide a manual for the open sharing of project output.

ADMINISTRATIVE REJECTIONS

The Plant2Food secretariat will review all applications and check if the applications meet the requirements in the guidelines for the specific call. During the administrative review, the secretariat will contact the project PI if clarifications are needed.

Any application that is not in accordance with the law and the administrative requirements of the Plant2Food guidelines will be rejected without peer review. Please check your application for all requirements before submitting, e.g.:

- That your project is within the framework of the chosen grant type (incl. project budget, timeframe, etc.)
- That you have all necessary signatures for required documents (budgets, declarations, etc.)

PRIVACY POLICY

Please consult Plant2Food's Privacy Policy for more information on how the applications and your personal data are handled.

The Privacy Policy can be found on our online community, WorldLabs and Plant2Food's webpage.



PLANT2FOOD

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If you have any questions regarding the matchmaking, ideation or application process, you are always welcome to contact the Plant2Food secretariat

E-mail: Plant2food@au.dk