

Call for Expression of Interest (EOI): Designation as IRC Anchor Institutions

(Ref: CEA-FIRST HE-101136771)

Deadline for Submission: [22 November 2025, 11:59 GMT]

Issued by: IRC Secretariat | International Research Consortium (IRC) on Food, Nutrition Security, and Sustainable Agriculture (FNSSA)

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Background and Rationale

The AU–EU International Research Consortium (IRC) on Food, Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture (FNSSA) is a bi-continental, multi-stakeholder platform launched in 2022 to strengthen coordination, alignment, and coherence across African and European research and innovation (R&I) ecosystems. The IRC operationalizes the FNSSA Roadmap 2027–2036, under the framework of the AU–EU High-Level Policy Dialogue (HLPD) on Science, Technology, and Innovation.

Building on the FNSSA Roadmap (2016–2026) and guided by the IRC Strategy and Implementation Plan (2025–2030), the IRC employs a decentralized coordination and delivery model anchored in six Functional Working Groups (FWGs). To ensure contextual responsiveness and inclusivity, the IRC designates Anchor Institutions—strategic, regionally embedded entities that serve as advocacy, coordination, mobilization, and knowledge nodes across Africa and Europe.

Anchor Institutions act as regional and sub-regional “hubs” to promote the IRC’s mission, mobilize networks, facilitate stakeholder engagement, and sustain coherence across research, policy, and innovation ecosystems. They represent the operational backbone of the IRC’s distributed governance system.

Purpose of the Call

This Call for Expressions of Interest invites eligible institutions to apply for designation as IRC Anchor Institutions.

Designated entities will serve as the IRC’s regional advocacy and coordination arms, supporting implementation of the FNSSA Roadmap and the IRC’s Functional Working Groups through:

- Expanding and diversifying IRC membership and regional participation;
- Strengthening partnerships among FNSSA actors across sectors;
- Facilitating regional communication, coordination, and policy alignment;
- Enhancing visibility, advocacy, and knowledge flow across the AU–EU R&I ecosystem;
- Supporting regional implementation of Joint Work Programmes (JWPs) and related performance frameworks.

Through these functions, Anchor Institutions will contribute directly to sustainable agricultural transformation, food systems resilience, and equitable innovation scaling across Africa and Europe.

Eligibility Criteria

Eligible candidates must:

- Be a legal national or regional public or private entity, and a signatory or registered member of the AU–EU IRC on FNSSA;

- Demonstrate institutional capacity and thematic expertise in at least one FNSSA domain (e.g., sustainable intensification, nutrition and food systems, agroecology, markets and trade, climate-smart agriculture, digitalization);
- Possess a strong national footprint and demonstrated ability to coordinate regional networks, alliances, or policy platforms;
- Represent one of the IRC's four geographic coordination blocks:
 - Eastern Africa & Eastern Europe
 - Western Africa & Western Europe
 - Northern Africa & Northern Europe
 - Southern Africa & Southern Europe
- Demonstrate experience in multi-stakeholder coordination, knowledge brokerage, or policy advocacy, ideally through initiatives such as CEA-FIRST, LEAP-Agri, DeSIRA, FOSC, StEPPFoS, or equivalent R&I programs;
- Show institutional commitment to IRC's values of inclusivity, co-ownership, transparency, gender equity, youth empowerment, and mutual accountability;
- Be willing to adhere to the IRC's Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) and Performance Reporting Framework.

Expected Roles and Contributions

Designated Anchor Institutions will:

- Serve as the primary regional advocacy and coordination node for the IRC in their geographic block;
- Promote and represent the IRC brand, principles, and services across national and regional R&I communities;
- Facilitate membership engagement and mobilization for the IRC and its FWGs;
- Act as regional focal points directly linking up with designated national focal points in A-EU member states for communication, events, and stakeholder dialogues;
- Provide strategic intelligence on regional trends, policies, and opportunities relevant to FNSSA;
- Coordinate or co-host regional policy dialogues, workshops, and foresight forums;
- Support the implementation of Joint Work Programmes (JWPs) and contribute to their monitoring and reporting;
- Submit annual regional progress reports and quarterly activity snapshots via the IRC MEL system.

Benefits and Incentives

While participation as an Anchor Institution is voluntary, selected entities will receive:

- Recognition as an official IRC Anchor Institution, featured across IRC communication and branding channels;
- Visibility and influence in shaping AU–EU FNSSA cooperation and investment agendas;
- Priority access to IRC coordination tools, joint calls, and partnership opportunities;
- Inclusion in bi-continental knowledge networks, exchanges, and foresight activities;
- Eligibility for performance-based incentives under the IRC Performance Fund (up to 15% for demonstrated regional impact and coordination outcomes);
- Access to capacity-building and learning events supported by the IRC Secretariat and partners.

Duration and Performance Review

Anchor Institution designations are **valid for two years (2026–2028)**, renewable upon performance

review by the IRC Secretariat and endorsement by the IRC Council. Renewal will be based on contributions to JWP delivery, MEL compliance, and evidence of regional impact.

Submission Format

Interested institutions should submit their Expression of Interest (maximum 10 pages, excluding annexes) containing:

1. **Cover Letter (1 page)**
 - Statement of intent and motivation
 - Institutional contact details
 - Signature of authorized representative
2. **Institutional Profile (max 2 pages)**
 - Mandate, vision, and FNSSA-related functions
 - Geographic coverage and key partners
 - Memberships in relevant networks or initiatives
3. **Track Record (max 2 pages)**
 - Overview of relevant FNSSA-related programmes/projects
 - Experience in stakeholder coordination and advocacy
 - Engagement in AU–EU or multilateral R&I platforms
4. **Proposed Role and Activities (max 2 pages)**
 - Proposed approach for regional coordination and outreach
 - Mechanisms for collaboration with IRC and FWGs
 - Planned contributions to communication, MEL, and JWP delivery
5. **Supporting Documents (Annexes)**
 - Organizational chart or structure
 - Letters of support (optional)
 - Certifications, affiliations, or other relevant documents

Submission Details

- **Deadline:** [22 November 2025, 11:59 GMT]
- **Submission Email:** ifrempong@faraafrica.org; secretariat@agrinatura-eu.eu
- **Inquiries:** mowusu@faraafrica.org
- **Subject line:** *EoI – IRC Anchor Institution – [Your Institution/Region]*

Selection and Notification Process

Submissions will be reviewed by the IRC Secretariat and endorsed by the IRC Council based on the following criteria:

- Thematic and geographic relevance
- Demonstrated institutional capacity and partnerships
- Commitment to IRC principles (co-ownership, inclusivity, transparency)
- Quality and feasibility of the proposed coordination approach
- Gender and youth representation in leadership roles
- MEL and reporting readiness

Notifications: by 29 November 2025

Onboarding & Orientation: December 2025 (virtual)

Formal Designation: January 2026



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Additional Information

For further details on the IRC governance framework, Functional Working Groups, and Anchor Institution roles, please refer to the *IRC Working Groups Strategy and Implementation Plan (2025–2030)* available at: <https://archive.faraafrica.org/s/gHf6foAaCBX32rt>