



# ECOTROPHELIA EUROPE

## European Competition for Creating Innovative Food Products

### T E A M S R U L E S 2 0 2 6

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## FOREWORD

Ecotrophelia has the ambition to promote entrepreneurship and competitiveness within the European food industry by implementing a training network of excellence in food innovation and the organization of national and European food innovation competitions "The Student Awards of Food Innovation" a real eye-opener for the food industry.

Ecotrophelia is a great platform for innovation and inspiration for the food industry.

It allows capitalising on the limitless creativity and energy of our brightest and most enterprising students, supported by the best Universities and High Education Institutions.

The competition is a major catalyst:

- offering students full-scale learning and training, by confronting them with real situations, the rules and laws of an uncompromising market in a state of perpetual evolution.
- developing a culture of curriculum innovation, by making changes to teaching methods, particularly through project-based learning, in direct contact with professionals in the sector.

Ecotrophelia is a "real ideas" incubator for the food industry, it is an age-group marker on the consumption trends of the Millennial generation and Generation Z.

## HISTORY

Founded in France in 2000, Ecotrophelia Europe was extended to a European level in 2008 and is now organised by the EEIG ECOTROPHELIA EUROPE, a European Economic Interest Group made up of trade unions from 7 European countries representing the interests of national food companies. Based on the principle of a "Champions League" for food innovation, each European country organises its own national competition to select the most innovative food project to be presented at Ecotrophelia Europe. Each country's selection is coordinated by its national food federation. The teams are composed of 2 to 10 students from public or private European higher education institutions, scientific or commercial.

Key dates of the competition:

- **2008:** First edition of Ecotrophelia Europe (then 'Trophelia') with 8 participating countries: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Slovenia, Spain.
- **2011:** Trophelia becomes Ecotrophelia following the ECOTROFOOD project approved by the European Commission.
- **2014:** Creation of FOODLAB, a European food innovation laboratory supported by the ERASMUS programme.
- **2015:** Ecotrophelia Europe takes place at the Milan Universal Exhibition 'Feeding the Planet, Energy for Life', with 16 participating countries.
- **2019:** Launch of FEEDtheMIND, an ERASMUS+ strategic partnership with 7 partners from 5 countries to develop new pedagogical tools.
- **2020–2021:** Online editions during COVID-19 with a professional TV studio and remote jury; Full replays available on YouTube.
- **2024:** Ecotrophelia celebrates its 25th anniversary.

Beyond the competitions, Ecotrophelia has become a network of excellence in food innovation training, mobilising higher education institutions and national associations representing the food and drink industry in Europe. The Ecotrophelia network, a reference educational model supported by the European Union, thus plays an organisational role in promoting innovation and entrepreneurship among students.

It is in this context that the national food federations and the European federation FoodDrinkEurope decided to create a European Economic Interest Grouping (EEIG) that will now take these initiatives forward: EEIG ECOTROPHELIA EUROPE.

**The ECOTROPHELIA EUROPE European Economic Interest Grouping aims to:**

- Promote cooperation and exchanges between SMEs and universities, research institutes, public and private bodies involved in food innovation,
- Define policies, organise the Ecotrophelia Europe competition and promote participation in the competition and its results,
- Promote educational excellence programmes related to food innovation,
- Raise awareness and disseminate information, in particular to students and young entrepreneurs.

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## ARTICLE 1. ORGANISER

The EEIG ECOTROPHELIA EUROPE organises a pan-European competition for innovative food products.

The Organising Committee of Ecotrophelia Europe is hereinafter referred to as the “**the Organising Committee**”.

## ARTICLE 2. COMPETITION RULES

Ecotrophelia Europe is a European competition for the creation of innovative food products, which pits the shortlisted winners from each participating country against each other.

In each country, the federation (or representative organisation) of the food and drink industry and higher educational institutions (universities, institutes of technology, etc.) organise a national event in order to select the most innovative food project to select a team that respect the rules of the European competition mentioned in article 5 and 6.

## ARTICLE 3. PARTICIPANTS

### 3.1. National organiser

The Ecotrophelia Europe competition is open to any national organisation recognised by the Ecotrophelia Europe Organising Committee as a food industry federation or national industry platform (whatever its legal form - association, company...). The National Organiser is responsible for ensuring that the conditions set out in Articles 5 and 6 are met.

The national organiser is hereinafter referred to as “**the National Organiser**”.

### 3.2. Student team

The team taking part in the competition must meet the conditions set out in Article 5 and must be registered by the National Organiser in order to be allowed to participate.

The team is hereinafter referred to as “**the Student Team**”.

### 3.3. Countries

Countries eligible to participate in the competition:

- National organisations from Member States of the European Union;
- National organisations from European countries which are not members of the European Union;
- National organisations from non-European countries as associated countries, with the approval of the Organising Committee.

## ARTICLE 4. TERMS & CONDITIONS FOR TAKING PART

### 4.1. Application

The National Organiser register the team that will participate in the Ecotrophelia Europe competition.

### 4.2. National competition

National rules may differ from the European ones to adapt to each organisation’s specific context and needs. However, when registering the national winning team for the European competition, the **National Organisation is responsible** for ensuring that the team’s dossier and presentation **fully comply with the European rules**, as outlined in Articles 5 and 6 of this document.

*Note: This clarification follows observations from the European jury, which has noted over several years that some registered teams do not fully meet the required standards—particularly regarding the expected content on food safety. The national winners represent the highest level of excellence from each country; therefore, it is expected that their work reflects the jury’s feedback from the national competition and is aligned with Ecotrophelia Europe rules.*

## ARTICLE 5. HOW THE STUDENT TEAMS SHOULD BE MADE UP

### 5.1. Composition of the Student Team

A Student Team consists of **at least 2 (two) and no more than 10 (ten) students**. Each student must be enrolled at a public or private higher education institution or scientific or business school. The competition is made for initial students. **PhD students or students with significant professional experience** (including but not limited to lifelong learning, career transition or people returning to university after a long period of work) will not be accepted.

Member of the faculty, professors, mentors are not part of the team.

### 5.2. Team Leader

Each Student Team must appoint a "**Team Leader**" who will act as the liaison between the Organising Committee and the team. He/she must be present at the Ecotrophelia Europe competition. **The Team Leader is a member of the student team**, not a member of the faculty nor mentor. This is the single responsible person for the team.

The organisation, management and supervision of the Student Team taking part in the competition is **the responsibility of the National Organisation**.

## ARTICLE 6. OFFICIAL REQUIREMENTS

*Note: the Student Team will have access to Team Area on the Ecotrophelia Europe website where they will find important information to be taken into consideration. All submissions must be made through the website by the due date to ensure the smooth running of the event.*

### 6.1. Innovative food product requirements

#### 6.1.1. Food Product – Official Specifications

The innovative food product entered for the competition must meet all the criteria set out in the following official specifications.

#### **THE FOOD PRODUCT MUST\*:**

- a) be **Safe and intended for Human Consumption**.
- b) be **Marketable**: The product should be suitable for retail, catering, or hotel sectors, though other relevant market contexts may also be considered.
- c) be **Innovative**: The product should demonstrate innovation compared to existing food products. Innovation may relate to the concept, technology, recipe, or packaging. Participants are encouraged to consult the Ecotrophelia Europe database and national databases to avoid duplicating existing products. Additional innovative features not listed may also be highlighted.
- d) be **Eco-innovative**: The product should incorporate environmental innovation, which could involve ingredients (origin, organic, low carbon footprint), packaging (recyclable, sustainable), manufacturing processes (energy or water savings), or distribution/logistics (new channels, direct-to-consumer), facilitating sustainability across the food production chain. Other relevant eco-friendly aspects may also be considered.
- e) **Stand out for intrinsic product qualities** : The product should excel in sensory and nutritional attributes, including taste, texture, aroma, appearance, and nutritional value. This criterion focuses solely on the inherent qualities of the food itself.
- f) be **Reproducible**: The product must be reproducible in a production unit based on technical specifications, including ingredients, production process, cost price, investment requirements, feasibility of production at scale, including logistics and supply chain considerations.
- a) **Comply with the relevant European Food Regulations in force on the day of the competition** in terms of:  
Food safety (microbiological, chemical, and physical safety); Hygiene and process control; Traceability and labelling; Additives, ingredients, and composition; Packaging and materials in contact with food; Advertising and nutrition/health claims; Overall compliance with EU food legislation (e.g., HACCP, ISO standards).  
Novel food: the product must comply with the EU legislation. If an ingredient is not safe and legal, the product can't be presented to the competition.
- b) be **Commercially viable**: Suitability for a local, national, or European market and addressing a clear consumer demand; Effective packaging and labeling for the target market; A coherent marketing strategy and

positioning; Economic viability (cost-effectiveness, potential profitability); Compliance with relevant food regulations and standards

g) show **overall coherence** for all the above criteria.

\*Please note that these criteria are not listed in order of importance.

### 6.1.2. Technical file requirements

The Student Team must submit a technical file of the innovative food product as requested in this article:

- ⇒ **Size of the document:** The innovative food product must be presented by means of an explanatory dossier limited to 20 (twenty) pages (without annexes) in A4 format, PDF version and written in English.
- ⇒ **Cover sheet:** must contain the basic elements of the team and project: Product name, students names, university(s) name, country name, product category, short introduction/summary of the dossier, mention of use of AI.
- ⇒ **Annexes:** Any annexes to this dossier shall be limited to 10 (ten) pages.

#### ⇒ **Content:**

The technical file must cover all the aspects to be assessed by the jury and mentioned in Art 6.1.1:

- a) **Description of the product:** exact name, category (e.g., savoury starters, desserts, ready meals, alcoholic beverages, etc.), general description, composition, sensory and nutritional qualities, technical specifications, manufacturing process, packaging, shelf life or any other relevant information;
- b) **Description of the product's innovation:** clearly explain the product's innovative feature, whether they relate to the concept, technology, recipe, packaging, or any other relevant aspect;
- c) **Description of product eco-innovation:** clearly detail the environmental innovations integrated into the product. These may concern:
  - Raw material: origin, seasonality, sustainable sourcing, etc.,
  - Packaging: recyclability, optimised design, reduce environmental impact, etc.,
  - Manufacturing process: energy efficiency, reduction of waste, recycling strategies, etc.,
  - Distribution and logistics: new delivery models, short supply chains, reduced carbon footprint, etc.
  - Other aspects

The objective is to demonstrate how environmental considerations are incorporated throughout the product's life cycle;

- d) **Description of the quality aspects of the product:** The Student Team must demonstrate that the product is safe for consumption and fully compliant with European food safety regulations;
- e) **Description of the marketing and communication plan** specifying how consumer acceptance of the innovation will be ensured, description of the message, target audiences (consumers, buyers, distributors), and the chosen communication channels (social networks, radio, advertising, trade communications, etc.), along with brand strategy and credibility elements;
- f) **Description of the entrepreneurial aspects** of the project: describe the complete business plan, detailing the problem-solution fit, market fit, market characteristics (e.g. size, geography, segmentation), route-to-market, sales strategy, financial planning, and risk management.

A global coherence and organisation of the dossier is expected with content mentioned in article 6.1.1 and 6.1.2.

The dossier will be analysed and evaluated by the Jury, as well as the oral presentation, on the basis of the criteria listed in Annex 1. Annex 3 is made available to help the National Organisers and Student Teams.

### 6.1.3. Use of AI

#### Policy on the Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Competition Submissions

We recognise the evolving role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in research, innovation, and creative development.

To uphold the principles of transparency, academic integrity, and fairness, the following policy governs the use of AI in competition submissions.

#### 6.1.3.1. Permitted Use of AI

Participants are permitted to use AI tools for:

- **Image generation**, including conceptual visuals, product renderings, and illustrative diagrams.
- **Text generation**, including drafting abstracts, reports, promotional materials, and other written content.

### 6.1.3.2. Declaration of AI Use

All AI use must be explicitly declared within the submission. A special annex can be dedicated to this. The declaration must include:

- The **specific AI tools** used (e.g. ChatGPT, DALL-E, Midjourney).
- The **purpose** for which each tool was used.
- A description of **how** the tool was used, including prompts, editing processes, and integration into the final submission.

### 6.1.3.3. Technical Content Requirements

Where AI has been used to generate or support **technical content** - including scientific claims, data analysis, Hazard Analysis, or other specialised knowledge - the submission must include:

- **Independent corroboration** of the accuracy of the content.
  - This may take the form of references to peer-reviewed literature, expert validation, or citation of authoritative sources.

Submissions that fail to declare AI use or provide adequate corroboration for technical content may be subject to disqualification or reduced scoring during evaluation.

*Example of declaration:*

*This policy was written with the support of AI in order to reduce the time of production. The tool use was Microsoft Co-Pilot. The prompt used was:*

*"Act as an expert in the ethical use of AI. I want to write a policy statement about the use of AI in competition submissions for our ecotrophelia and young scientist competition. The text should mention that it is OK to use AI for image generation and for text generation but that AI use should be declared, what was used, why it was used, how it was used. Finally there should be a point about any use of AI for technical content must show evidence of 3rd party corroboration of the accuracy of the technical content."*

*The original response was refined to prevent the use of emojis and to adjust tone. The final policy was read, edited by the author and reviewed by two independent people before adoption.*

## ARTICLE 7. TIMETABLE AND PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS (INFORMATION AND DOCUMENTS)

⚠️ If for reasons of force majeure the Student Team is unable to provide the above information by the specified date, the Student Team must contact the Organising Committee to agree a timeline.

⚠️ *Special Covid rule: the above-mentioned dates may be changed in the light of the Covid health situation.*

Each Student Team will be given a login to the website to submit the required information via *Team Area*:

<https://eu.ecotrophelia.org/team-area-submission-status>

The Student Team must provide to the Organising Committee:

### 7.1. By 14 July 2026: Project Submission forms - Submission of information and documents

The Student Team must submit the **Project Submission forms** via *Team Area* on the Ecotrophelia Europe website. These Project Submission forms include:

#### 7.1.1. Project information form

The Student Team must provide a public product description and a public written presentation in commercial language:

- A **short marketing presentation** of the product, written in **100 (one hundred) characters** (including spaces and punctuation);
- A **written marketing presentation** of the project, written in a **commercial language**. This text must contain a maximum of **1500 characters** (including spaces and punctuation) with a title that includes the exact name of the product and the exact category of the food product (savory starters, dessert, etc.);
- **At least one photo of the product and its packaging** and **one photo of the Student Team** must be sent to the Organising Committee (**very good quality - high resolution format - JPEG minimum 1Mo**). This photo must be as professional as possible (some examples are available in *Team Area*).

*Note: The Organising Committee will use the information provided in 6.2 for the global communication of the competition (social media, press, etc.) and in the database. The Organising Committee therefore strongly recommends that a good written marketing presentation and high quality photos are provided to promote the product and work of the Student Team. It is the team's responsibility not to disclose any compromising information in the public descriptions.*

### **7.1.2. University/HEI information form**

The Student Team must provide information about the educational institution(s)/university(s):

- Name(s) of the institution(s)/university(s);
- Logo of your institution(s)/university(s);
- Contact person(s) at the institution(s)/university(s), i.e. professors, mentors, etc.
- Social media of the HEI (link to the profile)

### **7.1.3. Team information form**

The Student Team must download, complete and submit:

- the template for Team Info file
- and the Collective Commitment Letter (Annex 3)

available in *Team Area*.

Information required in the Team Info file:

- Title: Mr or Mrs;
- First name, Last name;
- Date of birth (Team members must meet the requirements of Article 5.1);
- Year of study (bachelor's, master's or equivalent): example: 1<sup>st</sup> year of Master, 2<sup>nd</sup> year of bachelor, etc
- Name of the bachelor, master, other;
- Home address;
- Student E-mail address;
- Personal E-mail address – must be different from the student e-mail address;
- Phone number with country code such as +34 for Spain, +354 for Iceland, etc;
- LinkedIn profile;
- Bank details: to reimburse the teams after the competition (see Article 8) and to pay the prizes (see Article 10).

### **7.1.4. Material for preparation of the food product**

The Student Team must submit the material needed to prepare the product during the competition (plates, spoons, pan, etc). The material submitted will be ordered (upon availability with the renting company) by the Organising Committee to be used by the students during the competition.

Specific material equipment may not be provided by the Organising Committee. If a request for specific equipment cannot be provided by the organising committee, it is the responsibility of the Student Team to ensure that they have the specific equipment to prepare their food product.

If a Student Team intends to bring their own equipment, they must inform the Organisational Committee, so that no equipment is ordered.

*Note: No more material will be provided than that specified on the Material form, unless it has been requested by the teams and validated by the Organising Committee. The kitchens are basically completely empty of equipment, thus only the material requested will be available.*

## **7.2. By [date] 2026: Entrepreneurship Training Completion and Assessment – Mandatory for All Team Members**

The Student Team will be registered for the Inspire4Ecotrophelia entrepreneurship training proposed by EIT Food. It is an approx. 12-hour training to help the teams improve their presentation and acquire additional skills.

**The entire team must follow the training and submit the training assessment via the training platform (Canvas) by [date] 2026.**

One assessment is expected by team (not one assessment by team member).

After review of the assessment by experts, the Student Team members will receive a certificate. **This certificate is the proof that the Student Team members followed the training. This proof requested on a later date** (see Article 7.3.).

If a team does not provide proof of completion of the training for each team member, the team will not be eligible for the Entrepreneurship Spirit prize.

**Access to the training:** Special link to the Entrepreneurship training dedicated to the European competition:

<https://eitfood.instructure.com/courses/679>

*Note: In the frame of the European competition, the submission of the assessment via any link dedicated to the national competition won't be taken into consideration for the European competition. Only the link above is valid for the European contest, it is also available in the Team Area section Entrepreneurship training.*

### **7.3.By 1 September 2026: Project Documents form – Submission of project documents**

The Student Team must submit the following via the **Project Documents form** available in *Team Area*:

- The **Technical File** related to the specifications in article 6.1, in PDF format;
- The **Oral Presentation**: to be provided:
  - Oral Presentation Slide Deck that the Student Team will present to the jury on the day of the competition (ppt, etc.). A full draft version is requested in advance to ensure that everything works properly on the day of the competition and to prepare the entrepreneurship training seminar mentioned in Article 7.2.
  - Font files used in the presentation is requested as well. (The final version of the oral presentation will be requested at registration, on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the competition, before the beginning of the presentations);
- The **proof of completion of the entrepreneurship training for every student team member** (Article 7.2.).

*Note: The Oral Presentation is different from the Entrepreneurship Training Assessment. The Oral Presentation document is referring to the oral presentation (slide deck of the entire project) that the Student Team will present to the jury on the day of the competition.*

*Note: The members of the jury are committed to confidentiality, however it is the responsibility of the team to share the very sensitive information. The technical dossier is confidential and only the jury members and authorised persons designated by the organising committee will have access to it.*

### **7.4.By 15 September 2026: Reception of the packaging prototype**

The Organising Committee **must receive** the packaging prototype of the product by 15 September 2025.

The date is set in advance of the competition to allow for potential shipping delays. However, it remains the responsibility of the Student Team to ensure that the package is delivered on time.

Address:

EEIG ECOTROPHELIA EUROPE

To the attention of Maarten van der Kamp

c/o EIT Food, Ubicenter A, Philipssite, Bus 34, 3001 Leuven, Belgium

The packaging will be exhibited at SIAL Paris, in the Innovation area of the fair.

The innovation area is the most visited place of the fair, thus the packaging prototype must look as much professional as possible!

- If the packaging prototype is transparent - there are 2 possibilities:
  - If the food product **can** be kept at ambient temperature: the product should be sent with the packaging prototype to be exhibited.
  - If the food product **can't** be kept at ambient temperature: it is **not possible** to exhibit a product that might perish, expire and rot while exhibited during the 5 days of the fair. Therefore, the team must provide a mock-up product or photo in the packaging.
- If your packaging is not transparent, you can send it as it is.

## 7.5. Dates of the competition

The competition will take place on **October 18 and 19 2026**, as part of SIAL Paris 2026.

## 7.6. By 3 November 2026: Submission of team expenses

Each Team must **submit the Expense Summary Template** (provided in *Team Area*) completed with their team's expenses and **original and eligible supporting documents** (tickets, invoices, bills, receipts, etc...) via the **Refund form**.

More information on team expenses in Article 8.

# ARTICLE 8. TEAM EXPENSES

## 8.1. Team accommodation

The Organising Committee will book and pay for the accommodation of the participating students at Ecotrophelia Europe, up to a **maximum of 3 (three) students per team**, according to the conditions set out by the Organising Committee.

Accommodation for additional team members can be arranged provided the Organising Committee is informed of the request and the confirmed number of additional beds by 1 July.

However, a number of bed will be made available but the Organising Committee cannot guaranty a bed to every student team members due to high demand of accommodation during SIAL Paris.

The allocation of beds will work as first come, first serve.

In addition, the additional accommodation costs for more than 3 students per team is not taken in charge by the Organising Committee. It will be deducted from the maximum amount of transport and food costs (1000€ per team) allocated by the Organising Committee.

**Accommodation for the above-mentioned three students will be arranged and selected by the Organising Committee, for 2 nights, from Saturday 17 to Monday 19 of October 2026.**

**⚠ No other accommodation will be considered. If the Student Team prefers to book other accommodation (AirBnB, etc...), it will not be possible to request money or refund for the 3 students mentioned above, nor for any additional students the Organising Committee have booked a bed for. In addition, the cancellation fees will be deducted from the maximum amount of 1000€ allocated for transport and meals.**

## 8.2. Transport and meal expenses

Each Student Team will be refund for their travel expenses (transport and meals costs), by keeping and sending to the Organising Committee the eligible bills and receipts, up to a **maximum amount of 1,000€ (one thousand euros) per team** (whole Student Team: 2 to 10 students), under the following conditions:

### 8.2.1. For transport expenses

- **By plane, train or bus:** in economy class, on the basis of the cheapest nominative standard tickets available (on presentation of the original documents);
- **By car:** on the basis of motorway tickets and fuel bills. At the start of the journey, the tank must be completely full. On the return journey, the driver will fill the tank with the same amount of fuel used during the Ecotrophelia Europe journey. This final bill will be sent to the organising committee.
- **Public transport:** on the basis of transport tickets and receipts.
- **No taxi receipts will be reimbursed.** Uber or other similar companies are considered as taxi.

### 8.2.2. For food expenses

The Ecotrophelia Europe Organising Committee will refund food expenses for the period **from Saturday 17 to Monday 19 October 2026 up to 50 euros per day and per participant** for drinks, coffee, snacks and meals, on presentation of original invoices.

*Note: Alcoholic beverages will not be reimbursed.*

**⚠ No other costs than food and transport will be considered.**

### 8.3. Reimbursement Process

Information and documents to be completed and submitted by the Student Team by 3 November 2026 are available in *Team Area*.

Refund will be made to the Team Leader.

Each team's travel and food expenses will be paid by bank transfer to the Team Leader's bank account (unless the team expressly requests otherwise) after the eligibility of the expenses has been verified by the Organising Committee.

### 8.4. Reimbursement Documentation Requirements for Student Teams - Eligible Documents:

To be reimbursed, Student Teams must provide proper supporting documents that clearly demonstrate the eligibility of each expense. The requirements by category are as follows:

- **Restaurants:**

The Team must request an official invoice or detailed bill at the time of payment. The document must include:

- Restaurant name and address
- Description of the order or items purchased
- Date of the transaction
- VAT amount and VAT registration number
- Total price, showing amounts with and without VAT

- **Grocery Shops / Supermarkets:**

The Team must obtain a full receipt from the cashier, not just a card payment slip. The receipt should clearly list:

- Shop name and address
- Each item purchased
- Date of purchase
- VAT amount and VAT registration number
- Total price, showing amounts with and without VAT

- **Transport:**

Invoices must be provided for all transport-related expenses. Train and bus tickets, as well as boarding passes for flights, should also be submitted. Specific requirements:

- **Flights, Trains, and Long-Distance Buses:** Some companies provide invoices automatically, others require a request. The invoice must include:
  - Student name,
  - Company name,
  - Travel date(s) (departure and return, if applicable)
  - Total price,
  - VAT amount (if applicable)
- **Public Transport (local buses, metro, trams, etc.):** When purchasing tickets, the Team must request an invoice in addition to the tickets. The invoice should include:
  - Student name (if possible)
  - Company or merchant name
  - Tax number or VAT number
  - VAT amount
  - Total price

All submitted documents must meet these requirements to be considered **accounting-eligible** for reimbursement.

**⚠ WARNING: We do not REFUND:**

- *Credit or debit card payment slip*
- *Proof from bank account*

*These documents are not official accounting documents, they are ineligible for reimbursement, only invoices and bills are eligible.*

The Student Team can find out more about eligible documents in *Team Area*: <https://eu.ecotrophelia.org/en/team-area-submission-status>

## ARTICLE 9. JURY – ORAL PRESENTATION

### 9.1. Composition of the Jury

To select the competition winners and award the prizes, a European Jury will be established. It will consist of approximately 20 distinguished figures representing the food and distribution sectors, members of the European

Commission, industry experts from national food industries nominated by the National Organisers, as well as members of the Organising Committee.

Each National Organiser is responsible for nominating one representative from their country to sit on the jury.

## **9.2. Language**

The European jury will judge the students' presentation in English.

During the competition, each team will present their product in English and answer questions from the judges in English.

## **9.3. Packaging**

The student team must provide at least one prototype of the product packaging to the jury during their presentation.

⚠ It is the responsibility of the Student Team to provide the packaging prototype. The packaging prototype sent in advance to be exhibited during the fair won't be available for the oral presentation.

## **9.4. Oral presentation**

The oral presentation is composed of 2 parts:

- 10 mins of oral presentation: the team present their project to the jury
- 10 minutes of questions and answers with the jury

During the presentation, the jury taste the product and review the packaging prototype.

## **9.5. Scoring and Prize distribution**

Each member of the jury will assign a score from 0 to 10 for different criteria and for each project (see Appendix 1 - Scoring grid).

If a similar product concept already exists in the database, or into the market, the innovation score may be reduced.

### **9.5.1. All prizes**

The overall score for a project will be the average of the scores given by the panel members for each criterion.

The highest score will be awarded to the project which, in the opinion of the jury, best meets the criteria set out in the specifications. The jury will use the score results to decide the winners of the prizes; however, the jury is free to discuss the winners in accordance with the key principle of jury consensus - unanimity is not required.

In the event of two or more projects receiving the same number of points, a decision will be made by the Jury after further discussion.

### **9.5.2. Specificity for the Entrepreneurial Spirit prize**

The team with the highest score for the Entrepreneurial Spirit criterion (Annex 1) will be ranked first for this specific award. The jury will use the scoring results to determine the Entrepreneurial Spirit prize winners.

If the top-scoring team for the Entrepreneurial Spirit criterion also wins a main prize, the Entrepreneurship Spirit Award will instead be given to the team with the next highest score.

However, final decisions may also involve discussion, following the key principle of jury consensus — without requiring unanimity.

### **9.5.3. Specificity for the Communication Strategy prize**

The team with the highest score for the Marketing and Communication Plan criterion (Annex 1) will be ranked first for this specific award. The jury will use the scoring results to determine the Communication Strategy prize winners.

If the top-scoring team in this category also wins a main prize or the Entrepreneurial Spirit prize, the Communication Strategy Award will instead be granted to the team with the next highest score.

However, final decisions may also involve discussion, following the key principle of jury consensus — without requiring unanimity.

## 9.6. Impartiality

Each member of the jury is bound by the principle of impartiality inherent to the Ecotrophelia Europe competition.

The member of the jury appointed by each Participant to represent the national food industry and a jury member that participated in national selection may not judge the product presented by the national team of their own country/national competition.

The decisions of the Jury are final and not subject to appeal.

## 9.7. Confidentiality

The results of the jury's decisions will be kept at the headquarters of the Ecotrophelia Europe Organising Committee. The deliberation of the results and the ranking of the teams will remain confidential.

Any confidential information submitted by the teams and marked as such by the teams as "confidential" may not be disclosed or published without the express permission of the teams.

Jury members or any person in the jury's room are bound by a confidentiality agreement regarding the projects presented and the results of the competition.

# ARTICLE 10. PRIZES AND CRITERIA

Prizes will be awarded in reverse order of score.

## 10.1. Main prizes

The competition rewards 3 (three) main prizes:

- Ecotrophelia Europe Gold Prize: € 4000 (four thousand euros) and additional coaching by EIT Food experts;
- Ecotrophelia Europe Silver Prize: € 3000 (three thousand euros);
- Ecotrophelia Europe Bronze Prize: € 2000 (two thousand euros).

## 10.2. Entrepreneurial Spirit prize

The competition is endowed with a special "Entrepreneurial Spirit" prize of 500 € (five hundred euros), awarded by EIT Food.

Any demonstration of Entrepreneurial Spirit should encompass all the criteria used to determine the winners.

Entrepreneurship is fundamentally the ability to identify and seize new opportunities — often by solving problems, addressing unmet needs, or adding value to existing products or services.

It involves taking risks, demonstrating creativity, innovation, and perseverance, working effectively as a team, and having the vision and motivation to transform ideas into reality. It also requires ensuring the commercial viability of the project, including a clear business description, innovative approach, ethical and sustainable thinking, feasibility, scalability, and the 'X factor'. Further details are provided in Annex 1.

## 10.3. Communication Strategy prize

The competition is endowed with a special prize "Communication Strategy" of 500 € (five hundred euros), awarded by the EEIG ECOTROPHELIA EUROPE.

The food product submitted for the special prize must comply with all the criteria set out in the specifications defined in Article 6.1 of these Rules.

In addition, its presentation must clearly distinguish itself through the quality of its communication strategy. This includes how consumer acceptance of the innovation is demonstrated (e.g., consumer testing, raising consumer awareness, use of new tools, creation of relevant content on social media or other platforms), as well as the clarity of the brand message, brand identity, and the effectiveness of a multi-channel communication approach. Further details are provided in Annex 1.

## 10.4. Award Ceremony

The results of the competition will be announced at the Awards Ceremony at the end of the competition on Monday 19 October 2026 afternoon. All stakeholders of the competition are invited to join.

## 10.5. Payment of the prizes

The prizes will be paid by bank transfer to each student team member in the winning teams who has signed the Collective Commitment Letter (Annex 3). They will each receive an amount equal to their share of the total prize.

The winners accept the prizes in advance and they are non-exchangeable.

The Organising Committee is not responsible for any tax implications on receipt of the prize.

*Note: If a team member has a problem with his or her bank account, the payment can be made to another student if the student so requests.*

## ARTICLE 11. Disqualification of the dossier

The Organising Committee will disqualify any dossier that is not submitted in accordance with this rules, is incomplete or does not comply with the rules of the competition.

## ARTICLE 12. ACCEPTANCE OF THE RULES

Participation in the competition implies full and unreserved acceptance of the present rules by the Student Team and the National Organiser.

The National Organiser undertakes to sign the document referred to in Article 7.1., to distribute a copy of Ecotrophelia Europe rules to each registered team member, to guarantee compliance with all the provisions of these rules and to indemnify the Ecotrophelia Europe Organising Committee against all claims relating to the participation of the said members.

## ARTICLE 13. PUBLIC RELATIONS & MARKETING

Any commercial public relations (PR), advertising or any other form of reference to this competition by the National Organiser **must mention the competition's title and exact dates of the competition, as well as the name and type of food product that received the prize awarded by the jury.**

The Ecotrophelia Europe trademark and logo remain the property of the trademark holder. They may only be used by the teams for the limited purposes specified in these regulations, in accordance with the visual style guidelines of the registered trademark.

## ARTICLE 14. PERSONAL INFORMATION AND DATA PROTECTION

Ecotrophelia is GDPR compliant:

- All the data collected are dedicated to context of Ecotrophelia and will not be used outside of this context without the explicit consent of the owner;
- Any candidate registered in the competition has the right to access, modify, rectify and delete any personal data. To exercise this right, please write to the Organising Committee of Ecotrophelia Europe: [contact@ecotrophelia.eu](mailto:contact@ecotrophelia.eu);
- Ecotrophelia guarantees the confidentiality and security of the data by adopting appropriate procedures and measures.

To find out more about GDPR: <https://eu.ecotrophelia.org/gdpr-policy>

## ARTICLE 15. AMENDMENTS - CANCELLATION

The Organising Committee reserves the right to alter, postpone or cancel the competition or alter the dates and conditions if circumstances beyond its control so require, without incurring any liability.

## **ARTICLE 16. LITIGATION**

### **16.1. Applicable law**

The present rules are subject to Belgian law.

### **16.2. Competent jurisdiction**

Any difficulties in the interpretation or application of the present rules will be decided by the Organising Committee.

If the parties are unable to reach an amicable settlement, the competent court in Leuven, wherever the defendant is domiciled, will decide, even in the case of an appeal, summary proceedings or multiple defendants.

These rules are drawn up in English. In the event of any discrepancy between translated versions, the English version shall prevail.

#### **ECOTROPHELIA EUROPE ORGANISING COMMITTEE**

EEIG ECOTROPHELIA EUROPE

Registered Office: c/o EIT Food, Ubicenter A, Philipssite, Bus 24, 3001 Leuven, Belgium

[contact@ecotrophelia.eu](mailto:contact@ecotrophelia.eu)

Maarten van der Kamp – President | Marine Lonjou – Project Manager | Bruna Antunes – Project Manager

<https://eu.ecotrophelia.org>

## ANNEX 1: Scoring Grid

### 1- ASSESSMENT GRID OF THE JURY

The screenshot shows a digital assessment interface for a product. At the top, there is a photo of the product, labeled 'Photo of the product'. Below the photo, the product name '2 - Peelaste GREECE' is displayed, labeled 'Product name and country'. Underneath the name is a short description: 'Taste not waste! Potato peels transformed for sustainable snacking - a guilt-free delight.', labeled 'Product description'. A button labeled 'Look at the technical file' is positioned below the description, labeled 'Direct access to the technical file'. The main part of the grid consists of ten criteria, each with a dropdown menu for voting: A - HOW INNOVATIVE IS THE PROPOSAL?, B - HOW ECO-INNOVATIVE IS THE PROPOSAL?, C - INDUSTRIAL FEASIBILITY, D - MARKET CREDIBILITY, E - NUTRITIONAL CHARACTERISTICS, F - FOOD SAFETY AND CONFORMITY TO EUROPEAN RULES, G - MARKETING AND COMMUNICATION PLANS, H - PACKAGING, I - GENERAL PRESENTATION, and J - TASTE, ORGANIC PROPERTIES. At the bottom of the grid is a 'VOTE!' button. To the right of the grid, a marking scale is provided: 'The marking scale for each of the criteria ranges from 0 to 10 (whole numbers only)'. The scale includes: 0, 1 or 2 - not dealt with; 3 or 4 - insufficient; 5 or 6 - average - incomplete; 7 or 8 - well dealt with; 9 or 10 - very well dealt with.

### 2- DETAILS OF THE ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

#### A – How innovative is the proposal?

The assessment of innovation focuses on the product's **originality, creativity and novel features**. Innovation may stem from the **concept, technology, recipe, packaging, ingredients**, or any combination of these.

- Teams must demonstrate how their project differs from existing products through a **prior art search** (Internet, Ecotrophelia database, other resources).
- If similar products exist, the team must clearly explain the **innovative added value** of their proposal.
- A **detailed presentation of the technical innovation** is required.

#### B – How eco-innovative is the proposal?

Eco-innovation follows the EU's definition under the **Environmental Technology Action Plan (ETAP)**: innovations that help prevent or significantly reduce environmental risks, pollution, and negative resource impacts throughout the product lifecycle.

Eco-innovation may concern:

- **Ingredients/raw materials** (origin, seasonality, sustainability, carbon impact, etc.)
- **Packaging** (recyclability, reduced materials, optimised design)
- **Manufacturing** (energy savings, water recycling, waste reduction)
- **Distribution/logistics** (short supply chains, new services, reduced transport impact)

The goal is to demonstrate how the environmental dimension is integrated **across the entire lifecycle** of the product.

## C – Nutritional characteristics

The evaluation covers:

- Nutritional value and potential **nutrition/health claims**
- Composition and technical specifications
- Results of formulation and process optimisation

## D – Food safety and conformity to European rules Food Safety & Compliance with EU Rules

Food safety is paramount. The product must comply with **all relevant EU regulations**, including:

- Ingredients and additives
- Hygiene, processes, and traceability
- Microbiological criteria
- Temperature control (cold chain)
- Packaging and food-contact materials
- Labelling and claims (nutrition, health, advertising)
- Novel Food requirements (non-authorised ingredients cannot be used)

A **sensory analysis** and **microbiological validation** (shelf life/use-by date) are a necessity.

## E – Market Credibility

Market credibility reflects the team's understanding of:

- **Market dynamics**
- **Competitive landscape**
- **Target consumers**
- **Commercial relevance and product–market fit**

This includes market research, consumer acceptance data, and realistic evaluation of market potential.

## F – Marketing & Communication Plan

*(Criterion linked to the Communication Strategy Award)*

The marketing & communication plan must demonstrate how the team intends to **convince consumers** and build engagement.

Expected elements:

- Clear understanding of the **target audience**, supported by segmentation and validation
- A **coherent brand message** aligned with brand values and conveyed through a consistent tone of voice
- An effective **multi-channel strategy** (web, social media, in-store, email, etc.) using innovative methods
- Relevant and timely **content creation** that adds value at each customer-journey stage
- Use of **customer insights, feedback and data** to refine the strategy
- A strong overall **marketing plan**, including concept testing, market potential, positioning, and a coherent marketing mix

## G – Packaging

Teams must present a **physical prototype** or advanced model during the oral presentation.

Evaluation criteria:

- Compliance with EU packaging and labelling rules
- Originality and consumer convenience
- Technical relevance for preserving product quality

## H – Entrepreneurship & Business Viability

*(Criterion linked to the Entrepreneurship Spirit Award)*

Entrepreneurial spirit encompasses creativity, vision, motivation, teamwork and risk-taking.

Business viability will be assessed through:

- **Clear business description** (problem, value proposition, target customers, revenue model, competitive advantage, 3-year operating account)
- **Innovation and sustainability strategy**, including protection of innovation
- **Technical, operational and financial feasibility**, with validated assumptions and prototype testing
- **Scalability** (market size, growth, regulatory considerations, return on investment)
- The **X-factor**: clarity, coherence, passion, commitment — any distinctive element that strengthens the proposal

### I – Industrial Feasibility

The product must be **technically reproducible** on an industrial scale.

Assessment includes:

- A complete **technical file**: raw materials (origin, specifications), process flowchart, cost price, required investments
- Identification of **potential suppliers**
- A proposed **industrial production line** and plant characteristics
- Evaluation of **technical feasibility at scale**
- **Risk analysis**: HACCP, allergen management, microbiological safety

### J – Taste & Sensory Properties

The jury will assess:

- **Appearance**
- **Texture**
- **Aroma**
- **Taste**

Sensory quality is key to consumer acceptance and repeat purchase.

### K – General Presentation

The jury will evaluate the clarity, structure and persuasion of the oral presentation.

Expected elements:

- Logical narrative (hook, problem, solution, product features, eco-innovation, taste, nutrition, market relevance)
- Professional delivery, team cohesion, appropriate tone and communication style
- Effective use of pace, emphasis and pauses

## ANNEX 2: Student Team Collective Commitment Letter

[University Name  
University address  
Post Code  
Town  
Country]

EEIG ECOTROPHELIA EUROPE  
c/o EIT Food  
Ubicenter A, Philipssite, Bus 34,  
3001 Leuven  
Belgium

We the undersigned (first and last names):

[Complete here the Names of all student team members]

- confirm we are initial students;
- confirm we are not PhD students or students with a significant professional experience (lifelong learning);
- have read and accepted the Ecotrophelia Europe 2026 Rules;
- commit not to introduce any reminiscence which may violate or infringe the rights of third parties in the creation and presentation of the file submitted to the Ecotrophelia Europe contest;
- also commit to that, if we win a prize corresponding to our food product, and if commercialized, the product will bear on its packaging the Ecotrophelia Europe trademark and logo respecting the visual style guidelines registered as a Trademark at the European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO);
- authorize the Ecotrophelia Europe Organizing Committee to publish our names, photographs of ourselves and photographs of our innovative food product, including all shots in which our images appear, particularly those taken during the Ecotrophelia Europe contest and during the awards ceremony;
- assign our copyright for those elements defined in articles 6.2.1 and 6.2.2 of the rules, meaning the presentation, photo, product packaging and contents of the presentation back-up, for the reproduction of these elements in the supporting material sent out as part of the Ecotrophelia Europe competition.

We understand that our participation has financial implications. Therefore, if we cancel after the entry list has been finalised and accommodation has already been booked and paid for by the Organising Committee (and pre-financed by us), we acknowledge that our expenses — including airfare, transport, and meals — will not be refunded.

Date:

Signatures of each team member:

## ANNEX 3: Complete checklist – Ecotrophelia/Food product development

This checklist is available to the federations, if needed, to help them analyse the files of the national competitions.

### 1. Innovation

- The concept is new compared to existing products
  - The technology includes an innovative element
  - The recipe/formulation offers a novelty
  - The packaging is innovative (materials, design, functionality...)
  - Prior art search completed (internet + Ecotrophelia databases)
  - Clear explanation of how the product differs from similar concepts
  - Technical innovation clearly described
- 

### 2. Eco-innovation

- Sustainable ingredients (origin, seasonality, low carbon footprint, organic...)
  - Recyclable/compostable/optimized packaging
  - Eco-efficient manufacturing process (energy saving, water recycling, waste reduction)
  - Improved logistics (short supply chain, new distribution channels, reduced transport impact)
  - Lifecycle or environmental impact reasoning included
  - Clear justification of environmental benefits
- 

### 3. Industrial Feasibility

- Complete technical file (ingredients, origins, specifications)
  - Detailed process flow diagram
  - Production cost estimate
  - Investment needs estimated
  - Identification of potential industrial suppliers
  - Proposed industrial production line
  - Description of production plant characteristics
  - HACCP analysis completed
  - Allergen management documented
  - Demonstration of feasibility at industrial scale
- 

### 4. Market Credibility

- Market analysis completed
  - Competitive landscape analysed
  - Target consumers clearly defined
  - Consumer testing or validation provided
  - Market size/opportunity estimated
  - Strong and relevant value proposition
- 

### 5. Nutritional Characteristics

- Full nutritional analysis
  - Clear composition details
  - Assessment of nutritional balance
  - Validated nutrition claims (if applicable)
  - Compliant health claims (if applicable)
  - Results from formulation/process development documented
- 

### 6. Food Safety & EU Compliance

- Product complies with all relevant EU food laws
  - Hygiene and process controls (HACCP) implemented
  - Traceability ensured
  - Packaging compliant with food-contact legislation
  - Labelling fully compliant with EU requirements
  - Nutrition/health claims compliant with EU rules
  - Microbiological testing + shelf-life validation completed
  - Novel Food assessment completed (all ingredients are legal and authorised)
- 

### 7. Marketing & Communication Strategy

- Target audience clearly identified and validated
  - Segmentation relevant and evidence-based
  - Brand message aligned with brand values and consistent
  - Effective multi-channel strategy (web, social media, in-store, email, etc.)
  - Content adapted to each stage of the customer journey
  - Feedback and performance metrics used to refine communication
  - Full marketing plan completed:
    - Strategy
    - Positioning
    - Marketing mix (4 Ps)
- 

### 8. Packaging

- Prototype or advanced model presented
  - Packaging compliant with EU food regulations
  - Mandatory information included
  - Consumer-friendly and ergonomic
  - Adequate technical performance for product preservation
  - Design originality highlighted
-

## 9. Oral Presentation

- Clear narrative structure (hook → problem → solution → proof → market)
  - Well-argued and concise content
  - Tone and style appropriate for the audience
  - Visually strong presentation material
  - Cohesive teamwork and professional delivery
  - Good pacing, clarity and impact
- 

## 10. Taste & Sensory Quality

- Sensory testing conducted
  - Appearance assessed
  - Texture evaluated
  - Aroma validated
  - Taste validated
  - Consumer sensory feedback considered
- 

## 11. Entrepreneurship & Business Viability

- Problem clearly identified
  - Clear value proposition
  - Coherent business plan
  - Viable revenue model
  - Three-year financial projection completed
  - Assumptions validated with real users/stakeholders
  - Technical, operational and financial feasibility demonstrated
  - Scalability evaluated (market size, growth, regulations, ROI)
  - Innovation protection strategy defined
  - Strong entrepreneurial mindset demonstrated
  - "X factor" (clarity, passion, coherence, uniqueness) highlighted
- 

## 12. Overall Compliance With Product Requirements

The product meets all mandatory competition rules:

- Fit for human consumption and intended for consumers
- Innovative (verified through research)
- Includes eco-innovation
- Strong sensory and nutritional qualities
- Industrially reproducible
- Fully compliant with EU legislation
- Commercially viable
- Coherent across all criteria