CALL FOR APPLICATIONS FOR MEMBERS AND OBSERVERS TO THE

TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF POSSIBLE
PROCESS AND PRODUCT CRITERIA FOR STRUVITE, BIOCHAR AND ASH-
BASED PRODUCTS FOR USE IN FERTILISING PRODUCTS
(STRUBIAS TWG)

1. BACKGROUND

The European Commission's Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs (DG GROW), with the assistance of the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission (DG JRC), has set up the Technical Working Group for the development of possible process and product criteria for struvite, biochar and ash-based products for use in fertilising products (STRUBIAS TWG), which will constitute a sub-group of the Commission expert group on fertilisers.

The initiative follows the launch of the revision of the Fertiliser Regulation¹. This revision provides an opportunity to make the recovery of nutrients from waste and other non-traditional sources a more attractive business across Europe, thus contributing to the Circular economy. In order to enable such nutrient recovery, the EU legal framework for fertilising products should be adapted to the challenges that are associated with the use of secondary raw materials as input sources.

2. OBJECTIVES

The main objective for the Technical Working Group is to provide non-binding expert advice, including recommendations and opinions, to the European Commission on possible recovery rules for nutrients (and where relevant organic matter) from eligible materials into struvite, biochar or ash-based products. Those materials could be marketed as fertilising products or used as ingredient in the manufacturing of fertilising products. Where deemed feasible and suitable, the Commission may decide to elaborate such nutrient recovery rules, taking into consideration the expert advice.

More precisely, the work by the Commission will include the possible development of process and product criteria for struvite, biochar and ash-based products from waste materials in accordance with article 6 of the Waste Framework Directive² and from biological materials or from industrial by-products in accordance with article 5 of the Waste Framework Directive. Excluded from the scope of the work will be struvite obtained through chemical synthesis processes.


3. FEATURES OF THE TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP

3.1. Composition and appointment

The members of the Technical Working Group will be designated in accordance with the Commission rules on expert groups. More specifically, members may be one of the following organisations:

a) **EU Member State authorities**: the collective authorities of a given Member State of the European Union involved with activities related to fertilisers and/or nutrient recovery from waste, biological materials or industrial by-products, at national, regional or local level;

b) **EU trade/business/professional associations** (Subsection II of the EU Transparency Register);

c) **EU non-governmental organisations** (NGOs) (Subsection III of the EU Transparency Register);

d) **EU think tanks, research and academic institutions** (Subsection IV of the EU Transparency Register).

Each member organisation shall nominate a maximum of two individuals as their permanent representatives in the Technical Working Group.

Finally, EEA and candidate countries for EU accession may apply to attend the group’s meetings as **observers**.

The appointment of members and observers will be for three years, subject to renewal.

3.2. Transparency

Personal data within the scope of the group is treated in accordance with Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2000 on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data by the Community institutions and bodies and on the free movement of such data.

The competent Commission departments shall make available all relevant documents of the Technical Working Group such as the agendas, the minutes and the participants’ submissions, either on the Register of expert groups or via a link from the Register to a dedicated website where information can be found. Read access to such website shall not be submitted to user registration or any other restriction. In particular, the competent Commission departments shall ensure publication of the agenda and other relevant background documents in due time ahead of the meeting, followed by timely publication of minutes. Exceptions to publication shall be foreseen where it is deemed that disclosure of a document would undermine the protection of any public or private interest as defined in Article 4 of Regulation (EC) N° 1049/2001.

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4 http://ec.europa.eu/transparencyregister/public/homePage.do

5 Official Journal L 008, 12.01.2001, p. 1 - 22

6 These exceptions are intended to protect public security, military affairs, international relations, financial, monetary or economic policy, privacy and integrity of the individual, commercial interests, court
3.3. Operation of the Technical Working Group

Meetings of the Technical Working Group are convened by the European Commission, DG JRC or DG GROW. The Commission shall chair the meeting and shall also provide the secretariat.

The representative of the Commission may invite external experts with specific competence in a subject on the agenda to participate in the work of the group on an ad hoc basis.

Applicants should be prepared to attend all meetings, to contribute actively and positively to discussions in the Technical Working Group in a scientifically sound manner, to examine and provide comments on documents under discussion, and to act, as appropriate, as "rapporteur" on ad hoc basis. Applicants should take into account that meetings generally involve preparatory work, drafting documents and that it may involve collecting data, all of which may have to be realized within certain deadlines.

Members and/or their representatives who are no longer capable of contributing effectively to the Technical Working Group’s deliberations, who resign or who cease to comply with the conditions set out in this call or Article 339 of the Treaty, may be replaced for the remainder of their term of office. Replacement of members and/or representatives shall be chosen from among those who have responded to the call.

The members of the Technical Working Group and their representatives as well as observers and external experts are subject to the obligation of professional secrecy which, by virtue of the Treaties and the rules implementing them, applies to all members of the institutions and their staff, as well as to the Commission's rules on security regarding the protection of Union classified information, laid down in Commission Decisions (EU, Euratom) 2015/443\(^7\) and 2015/444\(^8\). Should they fail to comply with those obligations, the competent Commission departments may take all appropriate measures.

Members and their representatives will commit themselves to adhere to the Rules of Procedure of the Commission expert group on recovery rules for fertilising products.

Except for EU Member State authorities, EEA countries and candidate countries for EU accession, organisations need to be registered in the EU Transparency Register in order to be eligible as a member of the Technical Working Group.

The names of the member organisations and authorities shall be published in the Register of Commission Expert Groups. The names of identified representatives within the member organisations and authorities may also be published in the Register of Commission Expert Groups.

The Technical Working Group plans to hold two to four meetings in the period 2016-2019. These meetings will take place at the Commission premises in Seville (Spain) or


Brussels (Belgium). The kick-off meeting of the Technical Working Group has been provisionally planned for 6 and 7 July 2016 in Seville.

The working language for documents and meetings will be English.

Travel and subsistence expenses incurred by the participants to the meetings will be reimbursed by the Commission in the following way:

- Not-for-profit non-governmental organisations promoting environmental, human health or consumer protection, which are independent from public authorities or commercial organisations: travel, accommodation and daily allowance for one representative per organisation;
- EU Member State authorities: travel expenses for one representative per Member State, no daily allowance;
- All other members: no reimbursement of expenses or daily allowance

The above mentioned reimbursements will be in accordance with the provisions in force at the Commission within the limits of the available budgetary appropriations.

Members and participants to the meetings shall not receive remuneration for their duties.

4. REQUIREMENTS

It is important to note that the call for applications does not apply to EU Member State authorities (category a in Section 3.1).

Only organisations of categories b, c and d in Section 3.1 need to submit their application according to the provisions set out below.

4.1. Selection criteria

Applicant organisations should:

- have a specific profile or interest with regard to fertilisers and/or nutrient recovery;
- be interested in and of relevance to the implementation of the Fertilisers Regulation and
- preferably be an international or European umbrella organisation of national or regional organisations.

The proposed representative(s) of each applicant organisation should:

- have proven techno-scientific competence and experience, including at European and/or international level, in the field of fertilisers and/or nutrient recovery from waste, biological materials or industrial by-products;
- be of an appropriate hierarchical level and
- possess a good knowledge of the English language.

4.2. Supporting evidence

Applications for membership to the working group shall be sent to the Commission, demonstrating that the abovementioned selection criteria are met. Applicants must clearly indicate the type of organisation they represent, according to the classification provided in Section 3.1.
Each application shall include the following supporting documents duly completed and signed (scanned copies of the originals in PDF format):

- A cover letter explaining the applicant's motivation for answering to this call, briefly describing its activities and purpose and stating:
  - what contribution the applicant could make to the Technical Working Group;
  - how the applicant specifically fulfils the criteria listed in Section 4.1; and
  - the applicant organisation's name, identification number in the EU transparency register\(^9\), contact person, contact address, contact e-mail and contact telephone number (including country code);

- The Curriculum Vitae of the proposed representatives in the EUROPASS\(^10\) format. The following information should be included as a minimum in this CV:
  - Full name, gender and contact details of the proposed representative (including professional e-mail address and telephone number);
  - The authority/organisation for which the proposed representative has been working and the length of time he/she has worked there (with or without remuneration);
  - Other authorities/organisations for which the proposed representative has worked in the past (with or without remuneration; for the last 10 years);
  - The proposed representative's specific competences;
  - Knowledge of languages: self-assessment for English and other languages according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages\(^11\);
  - The specific projects and/or tasks the proposed representative has been involved in;
  - Any works that the proposed representative has published on fertilisers and/or nutrient recovery from waste, biological materials or industrial by-products;
  - Any experience that the proposed representative has acquired at EU and international level;
  - Any interest that the proposed representative has, other than the interests of the applicant organisation.

Further supporting documents may be requested at a later stage.

5. Application Procedure

5.1. Application requirements

An application will be deemed admissible only if it matches the requirements under section 4 above, sent at the latest by the deadline in section 5.2 below.

Each application must be completed in one of the official languages of the European Union. However, applications in English would facilitate the selection procedure. If another language is used, it would be desirable to include a summary in English.

\(^9\) Except EEA countries and candidate countries for EU accession


Each organisation shall also indicate which one of their maximum two representatives shall be the permanent representative to the meetings of the Technical Working Group and which one shall be substitute representative to the meetings. Please note, however, that invitations for the kick-off meeting will be sent out after the Technical Working Group has been established. Applicants and their representatives should therefore not make any travel arrangements until they have received the official invitation from the Commission.

5.2. Application deadline and delivery address

Interested applicants are required to submit their application forms before 3rd June 2016 to the following email address:

JRC-IPTS-FERTILISERS@ec.europa.eu

6. Selection Procedure

The selection procedure will consist of an assessment by the Commission services of the applications against the above-mentioned criteria.

When selecting the members of Technical Working Group, and their representatives, the competent Commission departments shall aim at ensuring, as far as possible, a high level of expertise, a geographical balance, as well as a balanced representation of relevant know-how and areas of interest, taking into account the specific tasks of the Technical Working Group, the type of expertise required and the response received to the call for applications.

Bearing in mind the need to keep the group to a manageable size, it may not be possible to offer membership to all those organisations that express an interest in joining the Technical Working Group.

The Commission also reserves the right to select other permanent and/or substitute representatives to the meetings than those nominated by the applicant.

Information on the results of the call for applications will be published on the Register of Commission Expert Groups.

For any further information please contact Mr. Hans Saveyn at +34 954 488 470 or via e-mail to JRC-IPTS-FERTILISERS@ec.europa.eu.