



THE GUIDELINES FOR APPLICANTS

1 OVERVIEW

ToBeReal supports innovative *bioeconomy projects* by providing tailored assistance services to help them progress towards flagship status. These guidelines detail the process for submitting an application, eligibility requirements, evaluation criteria, and what applicants can expect throughout the selection and assistance phases.

► What is a *bioeconomy project*?

- Covers all sectors (excluding pharma and biomed) and systems that rely on biological resources (animals, plants, microorganisms, and derived biomass, including organic waste, and biogenic CO₂), technologies and processes to produce food, feed, bio-based products, bioenergy, and services.
- Includes and interlinks land and aquatic ecosystems and the services they provide (including nature-based solutions), as well as all primary production sectors that use and produce biological resources from agriculture (including livestock farming), forestry, fisheries and aquaculture and other resources.
- Has its main activities in one or more of these areas: circular and sustainable bio-based sector; biodiversity and carbon-rich ecosystems in primary production; low footprint food production, processing and distribution, including novel foods; schemes for rewarding land and water managers for the provision of ecosystems services; sustainable fisheries, aquaculture and algae production.
- Relies in circular economy principles and resource-efficiency, low footprint production, climate mitigation and adaptation and enhancing biodiversity.



- Is individual (from start-ups, spinoffs, SMEs, or Large Companies) or collaborative at different maturity Readiness Level of Technology (TRL), Business (BRL), Regulatory (RRL) and Social (SRL).
- Is public, private, or public-private, with promising attraction of small and medium sized private investments (at least 2 M€) and/or of EU or national public funding (at least 8 M€) to become flagship project within a timeframe of 5 years.

► **What is a flagship project?**

- Aims at the horizontal and/or vertical integration of the value chain, and thus at the technological, commercial, legal, and social feasibility of systemic solutions with a long-term potential for growth.
- Serves to strengthen a bioeconomy sector or to generate model solutions to important challenges faced by society.
- Because of their specific and high-level importance, it creates an awareness of the problem among the general public.
- Produces national and international visibility for the country where it is set.
- The duration of a flagship project is from 2 to 5 years. The amount of requested private or public funding to become flagship is at least € 2M or € 8M, respectively.

2 ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

To apply for **ToBeReal** assistance, applicants must meet the following criteria:

- The participant represents a project that aligns with the definition of a *bioeconomy project* under **ToBeReal**'s scope.
- The project demonstrates potential for scalability and impactful contributions to the bioeconomy.
- The project originates from eligible countries or regions, prioritising those with underdeveloped bioeconomy sectors.



3 APPLICATION PROCESS

Applications are submitted through the **ToBeReal** project website including the following information:

1. **Initial Questionnaire (Online Submission).** A Word document, found [here](#), is also available to facilitate off-line preparation.
 - Contact details (Project name, acronym, entity type, lead contact person, etc.).
 - Motivation statement (maximum 500 words).
 - Description of project areas, technologies, and feedstocks.
 - Selection of the services found on the website. The applicant will have a maximum of 60 ToBe Coins to use in ToBeReal's service portfolio.
2. **Readiness Level Forms (Online Submission):**
 - A one-page description for each readiness level category following the instructions of the "Readiness Level Forms" found [here](#).
 - Technology Readiness Level (TRL) (max 1 page)
 - Business Readiness Level (BRL) (max 1 page)
 - Regulatory Readiness Level (RRL) (max 1 page)
 - Social Readiness Level (SRL) (max 1 page)

Upon submission, applicants will receive a confirmation email with a email copy of their application.

4 EVALUATION PROCESS

Applications will be assessed in four phases by the Evaluation Team composed by 4 evaluators and 1 rapporteur assigned from **ToBeReal**'s experts.

Phase 1: Assignment of Evaluators

The Evaluation Team, composed of technical and domain experts within **ToBeReal**'s consortium, reviews applications every 2 weeks.

Phase 2: Individual Evaluations

The four evaluators assess applications based on pre-defined scoring criteria, including innovation potential, scalability, economic viability, value proposition and business model, regulatory feasibility, and social impact.



Phase 3: Consensus Review

The Evaluation Team finalises scores and recommendations during a meeting facilitated by the rapporteur.

Phase 4: Communication of Results

Successful applicants will be contacted by the **ToBeReal** team to discuss next steps no later than two months from the date of the submission. Applicants not selected will receive feedback to help improve future submissions.

5 EVALUATION CRITERIA AND SCORING SYSTEM

Projects will be evaluated using a “Likelihood-based Scoring System”. Higher priority will be given to projects with:

- High likelihood to achieve flagship status within five years.
- Clear innovation potential and technical feasibility.
- Strong business models with realistic scalability and replicability potential.
- A strategy to achieve appropriate regulatory compliance.
- Clear identification of target stakeholders and an idea for their engagement.

A minimum of 4 and a maximum of 12 points will be scored per project. **ToBeReal** will prioritise projects with high likelihood to become flagship, requesting a minimum score of 9 for consideration. Furthermore, projects originating from countries and regions with underdeveloped bioeconomy are given an additional. **ToBeReal** will also ensure that project fulfils with the bioeconomy and flagship project definitions (you can find the definitions [here](#)).

Download [here](#) the full criteria that the Evaluation Team will follow to evaluate your application.

6 APPLICATION TIMELINE

The application process is continuously open from **May 2025 to October 2027**. Applications will be reviewed in three rounds:

- **Round 1:** May 2025 to February 2026
- **Round 2:** March 2026 to December 2026
- **Round 3:** January 2027 to October 2027



Nevertheless, the evaluation will be announced within a maximum two months after submission of the applications.

7 ASSISTANCE PROCESS

If selected, the following steps will apply:

1. A mentor and Service Allocation Team (SAT) will be assigned to your project.
2. An initial meeting with your mentor will be scheduled to refine service selection and expectations.
3. Services will be delivered within a maximum of three months after the applicant signs the service agreement with **ToBeRealL** consortium.
4. A feedback final meeting will be arranged to assess the impact of the services and outline next steps, including long-term assistance opportunities.

8 SUPPORT AND CONTACT

For questions or assistance with the application process, please contact the **ToBeRealL** team at *info@tobereal.eu*

9. Additional Information

Applicants can find further details and resources, including:

- Detailed descriptions of services → [here](#)
- Initial Questionnaire and Readiness Level Forms for download → [here](#)



THE CRITERIA THAT TOBEREAL'S EVALUATION TEAM WILL FOLLOW TO EVALUATE YOUR APPLICATION

Evaluation Report	
Scoring the Technology Readiness Level (TRL):	Score (from 1 to 3)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Innovation Potential in key bioeconomy areas: The extent to which the project will introduce novel and disruptive elements compared to existing solutions and approaches. The project's ability to introduce technical, conceptual, or methodological advancements that could have a significant impact on bioeconomy. ▶ Scaling-up potential: The ability to efficiently and effectively transition from a pilot or small-scale operation to a larger-scale implementation while maintaining or improving its performance and sustainability. ▶ Sustainability of the feedstock: Promotion of the use and valorisation of local biological resources fulfilling the principles of circular bioeconomy. 	
Scoring the Business Readiness Level (BRL):	Score (from 1 to 3)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Economic Viability: The project's ability to generate positive and sustainable economic results based on the target market segments and expected growth. ▶ Value proposition and Business Model: The identification of the value of the project's innovation solving specific problem or market needs and whether it offers unique features, benefits or advantages compared to existing solutions in the market. The assessment whether the business model is achievable and well prepared given the current stage of the project. ▶ Requested investment/public funding: The project has requested investment aligned with its objectives and scaling needs and/or the project has secured or planned to secure co-financing (e.g. private investments, grants). ▶ Composition of project's consortium & roles: The composition and competencies of the project-leading team. Technical skills, knowledge diversity, and team cohesion. 	
Scoring the Regulatory Readiness Level (RRL):	Score (from 1 to 3)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Regulatory feasibility: In scope for appropriate regulations and with potential to progress to regulatory approval. The feedstock's fulfilment with regulation imposing sustainability criteria and GHG emissions. 	
Scoring the Social Readiness Level (SRL):	Score (from 1 to 3)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Potential to engage with the right stakeholders: clear mapping of the relevant stakeholders and meaningful interactions with them. ▶ Fairness of the value chain: do all actors in the value chain receive a fair benefit relative to their input and risk assumed. ▶ Potential to communicate the benefits of the innovation to the general public. ▶ Internal evaluation of the social impact of the developed solution. 	



▶ Inclusivity: accessibility of the solution to a wide group of consumers / sharing the benefits of the solution with a wide group of stakeholders	
Is the bioeconomy project located in a country or region with underdeveloped bioeconomy?	Score Yes: 1 point No: 0 point
TOTAL SCORES	Include here the sum of all the scores