



## EU ORGANIC AWARDS

### General introduction

Increases in organic production contribute greatly to reductions in the use of chemical fertilisers and pesticides and anti-microbials and have positive effects on our climate, the environment, biodiversity and animal welfare. That is why organic production has been identified as playing a key role in the achievement of the objectives of the European Green Deal, the Farm to Fork strategy and the Biodiversity strategy. For this reason, the Commission has defined a target of 25% of EU agricultural land under organic farming by 2030 and a significant increase in organic aquaculture.

In support of that target, the Commission has adopted the Action Plan for the Development of Organic Production<sup>1</sup> in March 2021. This Action Plan takes the approach that, in order to stimulate organic production, consumer demand for organic products should grow. This requires, amongst other things, increased public awareness of the characteristics and benefits of organic production. For this purpose, the Action Plan includes the launching of annual awards recognising excellence in the organic value chain. These awards will be awarded for the first time in 2022.

Seven categories of awards comprising eight individual awards are planned:

- Category 1: Best organic farmer (female) and Best organic farmer (male)
- Category 2: Best organic region
- Category 3: Best organic city
- Category 4: Best organic bio-district
- Category 5: Best organic SME
- Category 6: Best organic food retailer
- Category 7: Best organic restaurant<sup>2</sup>

These awards are non-financial and will be awarded on 23 September, which is EU Organic Day.

### Call-specific introduction

- **Category 1:** The objective of the award for '**Best organic farmer**' is to reward a farmer (**one female and one male**) who developed an excellent, innovative, sustainable and inspiring project producing real added value for organic production and consumption.
- **Category 2:** The objective of the award for '**Best organic region**' is to reward a region that developed an excellent, innovative, sustainable and inspiring project producing real added value for organic production and consumption.

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<sup>1</sup> Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on an Action Plan for the Development of Organic Production: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX%3A52021DC0141>

<sup>2</sup> Stand-alone restaurant or as part of hotel or catering sector

- **Category 3:** The objective of the award for **‘Best organic city’** is to reward a city that developed an excellent, innovative, sustainable and inspiring project producing real added value for organic production and consumption.
- **Category 4:** The objective of the award for **‘Best organic ‘bio district’** is to reward a *‘bio district’* that developed an excellent, innovative, sustainable and inspiring project producing real added value for organic production and consumption.
- **Category 5:** The objective of the award for **‘Best organic SME’** is to reward a Small and Medium-sized Enterprise (SME) processing organic products that developed an excellent, innovative, sustainable and inspiring project producing real added value for organic production and consumption.
- **Category 6:** The objective of the award for **‘Best organic food retailer’** is to reward a food retailer selling organic products that developed an excellent, innovative, sustainable and inspiring project producing real added value for organic production and consumption.
- **Category 7:** The objective of the award for **‘Best organic restaurant’** is to reward a restaurant either standalone or as part of the hotel or catering sector proposing organic certified references in its menu that developed an excellent, innovative, sustainable and inspiring project producing real added value for organic production and consumption.

### Eligibility and award Criteria

1. Applications for the EU Organic Awards shall meet the following eligibility criteria:

a) The starting point for an application for one of the awards will be the following website:

[https://ec.europa.eu/info/food-farming-fisheries/farming/organic-farming/organic-action-plan/eu-organic-awards\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/food-farming-fisheries/farming/organic-farming/organic-action-plan/eu-organic-awards_en)

This website will link to the online application forms for each of the awards. Any application should be submitted by 8 June 2022, 23:59:59 CEST (Central European Summer Time) at the latest.

b) Applications must be in one of the official EU languages.

c) Applicants must be legal or natural persons established or resident in one of the 27 Member States of the EU.

d) The project submitted must be EU-based and refer clearly to one of the seven award categories/eight awards of 2022. The same project cannot be submitted for several award categories/awards. Each applicant can only apply for one award. The maximum number of applications per award is one.

e) The project should either have been fully implemented already or should be in a sufficiently mature state so as to enable the jury to assess it (i.e. physical implementation should be advanced enough to demonstrate the achievement of the objectives).

f) Specific eligibility criteria for each award category:

- **Best organic farmer (female) and Best organic farmer (male):** Certified according to Regulation (EU) No 2018/848<sup>3</sup>;
- **Best organic region:** No specific eligibility criteria;
- **Best organic city:** No specific eligibility criteria;
- **Best organic 'bio district':** A 'bio district' is defined as a geographical area where farmers, the public, tourist operators, associations and public authorities enter into an agreement for the sustainable management of local resources, based on organic principles and practices;
- **Best organic SME:** An enterprise certified according to Regulation (EU) No 2018/848, complying with the SME definition<sup>4</sup> (an enterprise that employs fewer than 250 persons and has an annual turnover not exceeding EUR 50 million, and /or an annual balance sheet total not exceeding EUR 43 million) and having 100% organic production<sup>5</sup>;
- **Best organic food retailers:** An enterprise certified according to Regulation (EU) No 2018/848 and having 100% organic certified references<sup>6</sup> on sale (excluding non-food products or food products for which there is no organic availability);
- **Best organic restaurant:** Having 100% organic<sup>7</sup> certified references in their menu, where possible<sup>8</sup>.

2. All eligible applications will be assessed by the EU Organic Awards jury against the following horizontal award criteria:

- **Excellence:** The awardee must have developed an excellent initiative producing real added value for organic production. This means good results and impact of the project in relation to its initial objectives. Projects shall demonstrate their impact on the area and territory concerned and show their results against the initially set targets and objectives.
- **Innovative character of the project in the selected award category:** Projects shall not be "business as usual" but should demonstrate new approaches, new organisational methods, or the development of new (or significantly) improved results for organics. The criteria for measuring the innovative character for each category are better detailed in the dedicated section of the category.
- **Sustainability pillars (environmental, social and economic) of the project:** Projects shall demonstrate their sustainability and their future as a self-standing initiative or project.

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<sup>3</sup> [Regulation \(EU\) 2018/848 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 May 2018 on organic production and labelling of organic products and repealing Council Regulation \(EC\) No 834/2007](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32018R0848) (<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32018R0848>)

<sup>4</sup> [Commission Recommendation of 6 May 2003 concerning the definition of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32003H0361&from=EN) (<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32003H0361&from=EN>)

<sup>5</sup> To be understood as organic products or in conversion

<sup>6</sup> To be understood as organic products or in conversion

<sup>7</sup> To be understood as organic products or in conversion

<sup>8</sup> In accordance with Regulation (EU) No 2018/848



- **Transferability and possibility to replicate the project elsewhere in the EU:** The project shall demonstrate that it represents good practice in a wider (EU) context and that it inspires or could inspire other places. The project should also show good ways of communicating its goals and results.

The applicants will be asked closed guiding questions, some of them developed in relation to the four principles of organic and the sustainability pillars. These questions will help the applicants to better structure their answers and the jury to obtain more data about the applicants.