



Co-funded by
the European Union

Request for EIT Food Regional Innovation Scheme Implementing Participants (EIT Food Country Representatives) Guidelines

IMP-RIS-26-18253

EIT FOOD

Warsaw, Poland

18 November 2025

Version: 1.0

eitfood.eu

Table of Contents

Call Fact Sheet.....	3
1. Introduction	3
1.1. About EIT Food	3
1.2. About EIT Regional Innovation Scheme.....	4
2. Adding Implementing Participants to EIT Food RIS	4
2.1. Description of EIT Food RIS Activity	5
2.2. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).....	5
2.3. Deliverables and Milestones.....	5
3. Description of Role & Profile.....	6
3.1. Role	6
3.2. Profile of the Applicant.....	9
3.3. Benefits for organisations selected as EIT Food Country Representative	11
4. Funding.....	11
4.1. Financial Sustainability	12
5. Call Timeline and Application Process	12
5.1. Timeline.....	12
5.2. Application Submission	12
5.3. Support.....	12
6. Eligibility, Evaluation and Selection Process	13
6.1. Eligibility	13
6.2. Evaluation Process.....	13
6.2.1. Evaluation Criteria	14
6.3. Appeal on Evaluation Results	15
ANNEX 1 – Eligibility.....	16
ANNEX 2 – Administrative matters.....	17
Onboarding	17
EIT Food Legal Framework & Legal Documents to be signed	17
Payment Schedule.....	17
Monitoring	18
ANNEX 3 - History of Changes.....	19

Call Fact Sheet

Title of Call	Request for EIT Food Regional Innovation Scheme Implementing Participants (EIT Food Country Representatives)
Objective and Scope	Select up to 15 applications entities that will represent EIT Food at the EIT Community Hubs in the EIT RIS countries
Call Deadline	18/01/2026, 23:59 CET
Online Q&A session	11/12/2025, 13:00 CET
Available Funding	The global budget for this call is €2.250M, with the allocation of €150K per country for 3 years (2026-2028)
Project Duration	1 March 2026 – 31 December 2028
How to apply	MyEITFood Portal
Contact Information	Milda Krauzlis - milda.krauzlis@eitfood.eu

1. Introduction

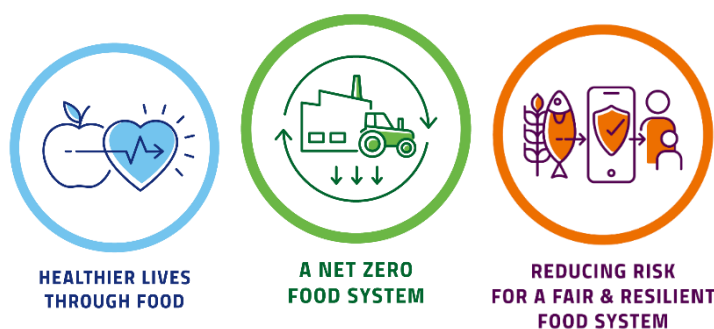
1.1. About EIT Food

EIT Food is the world's largest food innovation community, creating connections right across the food system. Supported by the European Union (EU), we invest in projects, organisations and individuals which share our goals for a healthy and sustainable food system.

We have built a unique not-for-profit business to carry out transformative programmes in skills, education, entrepreneurship, start-up investment and communications. We deliver these programmes in partnership with our members to create a culture and build a community which sees the long-term value in the food innovation we fund.

Our Missions

EIT Food's strategy is built around its three missions – Food for Health, Food System Resilience, and Net Zero Food System. They represent the long-term, systemic transformation goals of the organisation.



EIT Food's Missions respond to major societal challenges within the food system. The alignment of our chosen challenges towards United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and EU policy is detailed

in our main funding [strategy document](#) agreed with EIT (European Institute of Innovation & Technology). For more about our Missions-led approach please visit [our website](#).

EIT Food has further sharpened its thematic focus around three key areas that drive large-scale transformation in line with its missions:

- **Regenerative agriculture** – restoring soils and ecosystems while enhancing farm resilience;
- **Biotechnology** – enabling sustainable and scalable food production through cutting-edge science;
- **Protein diversification** – offering consumers healthier, climate-friendly options while opening new markets for European innovators.

These thematic scaling areas offer clear points for investment, policy support, and entrepreneurial efforts, ensuring today's projects contribute to lasting impact.

1.2. About EIT Regional Innovation Scheme

EIT Regional Innovation Scheme (EIT RIS) is one of EIT's horizontal measures for addressing regional disparities in the innovation capacity in Europe by broadening the participation in the EIT Community of the countries and regions classified as moderate and modest innovators according to the European Innovation Scoreboard.

At EIT Food, EIT RIS is integrated across all thematic areas. In the 2026–2028 period, EIT Food RIS activities will focus on: (1) Establishing and supporting a network of EIT Food Country Representatives in EIT RIS countries; (2) Strengthening business creation outcomes by increasing the participation of startups from RIS countries in EIT Food flagship entrepreneurship programmes such as the EIT Food Acceleration Network, as well as the integration of RIS-specific initiatives such as the Regional Innovation Booster; (3) Expanding RIS-oriented education activities by increasing the participation of learners from RIS countries in the Biotechnology and Resilient Agriculture Academies and related training opportunities that build skills in venture creation, startup development and sustainable farming. For more information, please visit the [EIT Food website](#).

Place-based approach is a key element of EIT RIS, which is operationalised via local Hubs that connect regional innovation actors, build their capacity and link them into the pan-European EIT Community. Since 2023, the EIT has been rolling out a new network of **EIT Community Hubs**¹. Led by an **EIT Community Officer (ECO)**, the Hub brings together the Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs, e.g. EIT Food) that have established a presence in the country, with an aim of implementing joint activities, engaging diverse stakeholder groups, and fostering synergies between the EIT KICs to maximise community outreach and innovation uptake, acting as the one-stop shop for EIT Community activities in the country. For more information about the EIT, EIT RIS and EIT Community Hubs, visit www.eit.europa.eu. The updated EIT Regional Innovation Scheme Implementation Framework is available at [this link](#).

2. Adding Implementing Participants to EIT Food RIS

This Request for Implementing Participants aims to select organisations to serve as **EIT Food Country Representatives** in up to **15 EIT RIS countries** in Central, Eastern and Southern Europe for the **2026-2028 period**.

¹ For more information about the EIT Community Hubs in the different countries, please visit "EIT Community in your country" section of www.eit-ris.eu.

2.1. Description of EIT Food RIS Activity

The network of EIT Food Country Representatives builds on the previous network of EIT Food Hubs launched in 2018 and active in 15 countries in 2025². Country Representatives, operating as part of the EIT Community Hubs, will strengthen EIT Food's national presence by engaging new partners, mobilising actors across the knowledge triangle, and supporting participation in EIT Food programmes. They will help address local ecosystem needs, facilitate capacity building, support early-stage innovation, and foster the transfer and application of new technologies aligned with EIT Food's missions.

2.2. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

All EIT Food funded activities are required to contribute to Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), with a particular focus on the **core KPIs** (marked in red). The KPIs listed below are those that may be relevant for EIT Food Country Representatives, depending on the activities included in their Action Plans:

- **EITHE03.2-EITRIS** EIT RIS Start-ups/scale-ups supported for a minimum of 2 months
- **EITHE05.2-EITRIS** EIT RIS start-ups created of EIT labelled MSc/PhD & other programmes
- **EITHE06.2-EITRIS** Investment attracted by KIC supported EIT RIS start-ups/scale-ups
- **EITHE07.2-EITRIS** EIT RIS Graduates from EIT labelled MSc/PhD programmes and other education activities awarded EIT Label
- EITHE08.2-EITRIS Participants in non-labelled education and training from EIT RIS

For more information about the description and requirements of each KPI, please carefully read the [EIT Food KPI Guidance Document](#). All selected EIT Food Country Representatives will have to report on their achievement of KPI targets annually in the grant management tool by providing the required structured data and documentation for verification.

2.3. Deliverables and Milestones

The EIT Food Regional Innovation Scheme has the following deliverables:

- D1: Signed Memorandums of Understanding between the appointed EIT Food Country Representative and the EIT Community Hub
- D2: Signed Annual Action Plans of the appointed EIT Food Country Representatives
- D3: Bi-annual performance reports (prepared by the appointed EIT Food Country Representatives)
- Consolidated annual performance report of the project, incl. KPI reporting (prepared by the Activity Leader)
- Communication and Dissemination Plan

Grant recipients have obligations on communication, dissemination and visibility rules. Please see Article 17 of the [Model Grant Agreement](#) and EIT Food's [Brand Guidelines](#).

Grant recipients must adhere to [EIT Food Intellectual Property's \(IP\) Policy](#) which complies with the IP provisions outlined in Article 16 of the Horizon Europe [Model Grant Agreement](#).

² You can find more information about the EIT Food Hubs at [this link](#).

3. Description of Role & Profile

3.1. Role

EIT Food Country representatives are expected to implement the following tasks:

Activity	Estimated effort
Task 1: Operate in the framework of and contribute to the EIT Community Hub in your country	10%
Task 2: Represent EIT Food in the agrifood ecosystem	20%
Task 3: Build a pipeline of eligible startups for EIT Food programmes and activities	15%
Task 4: Build a pipeline of learners for EIT Food programmes and courses for EIT Label	10%
Task 5: Contribute to innovation and entrepreneurship capacity building in the country	30%
Task 6: Management & Communication	15%

1. Operate in the framework of and contribute to the EIT Community in your country

EIT Food Country Representatives will **operate under the “umbrella” of the EIT Community Hub** and will become its members by signing a Memorandum of Understanding. The EIT Community Hub is the gateway to all KIC representatives and will spearhead dialogue with the local authorities, consolidate and scale up existing activities of the EIT KICs in the country and implement cross-KIC activities tailored to the local needs. The EIT Food Country Representatives will actively contribute to this work by engaging in joint activities and informing about its own and EIT Food activities.

NOTE: EIT has put in place a common **branding** approach across all EIT Community Hubs and their Community Members who are referred to as “EIT Food Country Representative [country], member of the EIT Community Hub [country]”.

Performance target Task 1	Description	2026	2027	2028
Deliverables	Signed MOU with EIT Community Hub	1		
	Attendance of meetings organised by ECO (at least quarterly)	3	4	4
	Regular sharing of information with the ECO (at least monthly)	8	11	11
KPIs	Cross-KIC events or activities (co-)organised by the EIT Food Country Representative	1	1	1

2. Represent EIT Food in the agrifood ecosystem in your country

This task focuses on strengthening EIT Food’s visibility and stakeholder engagement in the country. The Country Representative will serve as EIT Food’s primary contact point, fostering collaboration, identifying opportunities, and promoting EIT Food’s programmes and instruments.

Indicative activities:

- Develop and maintain an overview of the national agrifood ecosystem, including key stakeholders across the Knowledge Triangle (business, research, and education).
- Serve as the main contact point for organisations interested in joining EIT Food activities or partnerships.
- Represent EIT Food at national and regional agrifood events to promote its portfolio of programmes and instruments.

- Identify opportunities for collaboration and complementary funding (national, regional, or EU-level schemes such as ESIF or IPA III).

Performance targets Task 2	Description	2026	2027	2028
Deliverables	Database of key stakeholders (target: number of stakeholders)	30	30	30
	Overview of funding opportunities and collaboration opportunities for EIT Food	1	1	1
KPIs	Number of national-level innovation events targeting agrifood ecosystem attended by the EIT Food Country Representative to promote the EIT Food	1	1	1
	Number of potential partnerships to apply for funding identified	1		

3. Build a pipeline of eligible startups for EIT Food programmes and activities

The Country Representative will proactively engage with the national startup ecosystem to identify, support and prepare innovative agrifood ventures for participation in EIT Food and cross-KIC entrepreneurship programmes, such as [EIT Jumpstarter](#), [EIT Regional Innovation Booster](#) and [EIT Food entrepreneurship programmes](#), e.g. EIT Food Accelerator Network (EIT FAN).

Indicative activities:

- Monitor the national agrifood startup ecosystem to identify emerging agrifood startups and maintain regular contact with the startup support ecosystem such as incubators, accelerators, innovation agencies.
- Scout promising startups for EIT Food and cross-KIC entrepreneurship programmes and support them during the application process. We expect the Country Representatives to provide hands-on support, e.g. group or one-to-one sessions (pitch or proposal training, etc.), to improve the quality of applications. Such skills can also be applicable to other contexts.
The EIT and EIT Food programmes relevant for this subtask will be defined on a rolling basis by EIT Food, based on the current needs of the organisation.
- Track progress of alumni from EIT Food support programmes implemented in 2023-2025 (incl. by EIT Food Hubs). The goal of this task is to identify any developments relevant to EIT Food KPI monitoring, including KPI EITHE05.2 (startups established), KPI EITHE02.4 (products launched on the market).

Performance targets Task 3	Description	2026	2027	2028
Deliverables	Database of agrifood startups with a profile, information on interactions, matching to EIT and EIT Food programmes	1	1	1
	Database of alumni, information on interactions and progress made since their participation in an EIT Food / EIT Food Hub programme or activity	1	1	1
	Comprehensive overview of the startup support ecosystem, sectors in focus by the regional and national policies, etc.	1	1	1
	Startup feedback on the support provided	1	1	1
KPIs	Number of startups supported by the Country Representatives that successfully completed an eligible application to programmes designated by EIT Food	5	5	5

4. Build a pipeline of learners for EIT Food programmes and courses for EIT label

The Country Representative will help attract learners to EIT Food's education portfolio, including the EIT Food Master in Food Systems and the EU Skills Academies in Biotechnology and Resilient Agriculture, foreseen to be launched in the second half of 2026.

Indicative activities:

- Identify and engage suitable learners for EIT Food programmes (students, professionals, researchers).
- Promote EIT Food's education offer and the EIT Food Course Catalogue to relevant audiences.
- Participate in education-related events to raise awareness and increase applications.
- Identify suitable programmes (may be in local language) for the EIT Food course catalogue that may be added through accreditation and offered on a commercial basis.

Performance target Task 4	Description	2026	2027	2028
Deliverables	Information on learners & courses scouted to EIT Food programmes, as well as efforts made to reach the target audience	1	1	1
	Mapping of the education market, including an overview of course providers and learner numbers in agricultural and food science	1	1	1
KPIs	Number of learners that have submitted an eligible application to EIT Food Education courses (Academies, Master programme)	5	5	5

5. Contribute to innovation and entrepreneurship capacity building in the country

The Country Representative will implement one activity per year that strengthens national innovation and entrepreneurship capacity in the agrifood sector, aligned with EIT Food's missions and national priorities.

The type of activity may include a hackathon, training for startups (additional to any training activity aimed at application to entrepreneurship programmes), investor matchmaking sessions, engagement activities with corporates and other stakeholders, or a different format. The choice of the format and thematic focus of the activity needs to be well justified and fit within the overall strategy and activity plan of the EIT Food Country Representative.

NOTE: Any proposed activity should contribute to one of the **core KPIs** (please see Section 2.2, marked in red).

Performance target Task 5	Description	2026	2027	2028
Deliverables	Activity concept approved by EIT Food (as part of Action Plan)	1	1	1
	Completed publication brief and visual for publication on FoodHIVE	1	1	1
	Participant feedback	1	1	1
KPIs	At least one of the core KPIs listed in Section 2.2 of these Guidelines (targets to be revised depending on the chosen KPI).	TBD	TBD	TBD

6. Management & Communication

This task ensures effective planning, coordination, reporting, and communication of the EIT Food Country Representative's activities in line with EIT Food's objectives and branding.

In case of a consortium, the Lead organisation is responsible for ensuring that the supporting Consortium Member delivers assigned tasks and meets all reporting and communication requirements.

Indicative activities:

- Prepare and annually update the **Action Plan**, outlining the thematic focus, planned activities, event calendar, and budget. In case of updates or changes, the Action Plan will be updated at the time of 6-monthly reporting.
- Participate in EIT Food information and training sessions, and up to two in-person network meetings annually.
- Submit bi-annual **Performance Reports** summarising activities, deliverables, and KPI progress. Based on these reports, EIT Food will assess the effectiveness of activities. If deliverables or KPIs are of insufficient quality or not implemented, EIT Food may discontinue the collaboration.
- **Communication activities** – the EIT Food Country Representatives will implement communication activities that support Tasks 1-5. In addition to promotion of events and programmes using various channels, the EIT Food Country Representatives must maintain regular communication with the identified stakeholders and carry out other communication activities that increase engagement with EIT Food and strengthen its national presence.

NOTE: All communication undertaken by the selected applicants in the role of the EIT Food Country Representative must be done in alignment with the EIT Food Communication Strategy and branding requirements, which will be communicated at the start of the implementation.

Performance target Task 6	Description	2026	2027	2028
Deliverables	Annual Action Plan, incl. Communication Plan (signed)	1	1	1
	Bi-annual performance report	2	2	2
KPIs	Number of in-person meetings attended	2	2	2
	Items of media coverage (printed, online, radio, TV)	4	4	4

In addition to the 6 tasks listed above, EIT Food Country Representatives may **contribute to the implementation of EIT Food activities**, including Entrepreneurship and Education initiatives, within the framework of the EIT Food instruments portfolio across EIT RIS countries.

3.2. Profile of the Applicant

In this Request for Implementing Participants, EIT Food seeks to appoint up to 12 Country Representatives. Only the best applications will be selected and receive funding.

Eligible Countries

This request targets organisations from the following countries:

- | | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------|----------------|
| 1. Albania | 5. Cyprus | 10. Italy |
| 2. Bosnia and Herzegovina | 6. Czech Republic | 11. Latvia |
| 3. Bulgaria | 7. Estonia | 12. Lithuania |
| 4. Croatia | 8. Greece | 13. Malta |
| | 9. Hungary | 14. Montenegro |

15. North Macedonia
16. Portugal
17. Romania

18. Serbia
19. Slovakia
20. Slovenia

21. Türkiye
22. Ukraine

NOTE:

- In case EIT Food opens an EIT Food office in one of the countries where an EIT Food Country Representative will be selected, the EIT Food Country Representative will discontinue its performance as of the following year.
- If a collaboration agreement with the local Government is signed in one of the countries where an EIT Food Country Representative will be selected, the country will be excluded from the call, as the role of Country Representative will be appointed and financed by the local authorities.

Only organisations established in the countries targeted by this procedure are eligible to apply and the applicants must be based in the specific country for which they seek to become the EIT Food Country Representative.

Application Structure

The application can be submitted by:

- an **individual organisation** having the status of a legal entity for at least 3 years
- OR a **consortium** formed by up to two organisations, both having the status of legal entities for at least 3 years. This option should be chosen only where it clearly **adds value**, ensuring that each partner has distinct and complementary roles. One organisation will act as the Lead, and the other as a supporting Consortium Member, delivering selected tasks (see Section 3.1.)

One organisation can be included in one proposal only.

Required experience

The requirements below should be satisfied either by the single applicant or the consortium as a whole.

Requirement	How the Applicant can demonstrate experience in Application
Recognised position in the national agrifood innovation ecosystem and strong stakeholder network.	• Brief description of organisation's role in the agrifood ecosystem. • List and brief description of key stakeholders and partners across the agrifood ecosystem representing the Knowledge Triangle (including their role, relevance, and existing relationship with the applicant). • Examples of prior collaborations or activities where the organisation brought stakeholders together to work on a common topic, project, or initiative.
Proven experience in supporting early-stage innovators, entrepreneurs and/or startups .	• Examples of support provided to entrepreneurs and startups such as delivery of acceleration programmes, mentoring, pitch training, investor matchmaking, or other capacity-building activities (titles, years, outputs). • Number and type of entrepreneurs supported in the last 2 years. • Testimonials or measurable outcomes (e.g., investment rounds, product launches).

Experience in organising capacity-building and stakeholder engagement activities	• List of relevant events organised (date, topic, target audience, number of participants). • Short description of the format and outcomes of the event.
Ability to identify and leverage complementary funding .	• List of past or ongoing projects funded by national/regional programmes (incl. EU funded) or private sponsors (please limit the list to 3 projects in the agrifood sector secured or implemented in the past 3 years).
Experience in promoting innovation programmes and conducting outreach.	• Examples of outreach and communication activities (e.g. promotional campaigns, newsletter distribution, social media engagement, presentations at national events). • Channels and tools used to reach target audiences. • Evidence of reach and engagement (e.g. number of participants at events, social media follower growth, mailing list size, typical attendance at workshops).

3.3. Benefits for organisations selected as EIT Food Country Representative

Organisations designated as EIT Food Country Representatives will benefit from their association with EIT Food and the wider EIT Community, gaining the right to use the title “EIT Food Country Representative [country], member of the EIT Community Hub [country]” for eligible activities aligned with EIT Food’s strategy. They will also have the opportunity to participate in dedicated EIT Food events, network with the partner community.

Becoming an EIT Food Country Representative offers an opportunity to strengthen relationships with EIT Food partners, engage actively with the EIT Community, and increase visibility within national and regional innovation ecosystems. This designation can also serve as a catalyst for attracting additional funding and expanding innovation-oriented initiatives at the country level.

4. Funding

We expect to fund up to 15 Country Representatives with EIT grant funding of maximum €150.000 per country for 2026-2028 (€50.000 annually).

EIT Food Regional Innovation Scheme will run from January 2026 to December 2028, while the EIT Food Country Representatives will start the implementation of their activities following the completion of the selection procedure (please refer to Section 5.1).

The selected Implementing participants will receive a **subgrant** to fund their costs and will be added to the Project as Implementing Participants.

The Subgrant is based on actual costs and value for money. All costs, including co-funding, need to comply with Horizon Europe regulations regarding the eligibility of expenses. Please refer to Article 6 of the [Model Grant Agreement](#) and the [Annotated Model Grant Agreement](#).

This funding is implemented under Main EIT Grant Agreement 26-28. There is a 6 million EUR limit per participants from Member States of the European Union (EU) and from [Horizon Europe Associate Countries](#) for the whole 3-year Grant Agreement. Legal entities from non-Horizon Europe Associate countries can participate in consortia but are limited to funding of 60 000 over 3 years for a Grant

Agreement. In those limits are included all the EIT Funding awarded to an organization across all the activities and prizes for the 3-year grant agreement.

4.1. Financial Sustainability

EIT Food will reimburse up to 80% of total eligible costs of each EIT Food Country Representative for participation in the Project. The co-funding contributed by the individual organisation or consortium members should be at least 20% of funding received within the Project (for EIT grant of €50.000 the co-funding of 20% amounts to €12,500). We encourage the EIT Food Country Representatives to seek possibilities for co-funding of their activities from local private and public funding sources. Please note that other EU funding is not an eligible source of co-funding under this scheme.

5. Call Timeline and Application Process

5.1. Timeline

This funding opportunity follows the timeline below:

Call Open Date	19/11/2025
Online Q&A session	11/12/2025, 13:00 CET
Call Deadline	18/01/2026, 23:59 CET
Evaluation, stage 1	By 05/02/2026
<i>Interviews (stage 1, only if needed)</i>	<i>Between 2/02 and 4/02</i>
Evaluation, stage 2	By 17/02/2026
<i>Interviews (stage 2)</i>	<i>Between 12/02 and 18/02/2026</i>
Communication to selected participants	By 20/02/2026
Standstill period, Onboarding, Validation and Contracting	By 20/03/2026
Indicative start of project implementation	By 20/03/2026

A **standstill period** of 30 days applies to this call. This is a set time after funding selection for appeals, final administrative checks, and compliance in the award process. The implementation cannot start before this period.

5.2. Application Submission

Applications must be submitted via [MyEITFood Portal](#), no later than the call deadline.

5.3. Support

If you have any questions about this Request for Implementing Participants, please contact milda.krauzlis@eitfood.eu

Please visit EIT Food website (www.eitfood.eu/open-calls-overview) for any updates on this call and information about upcoming events to support your application. You will also find our list of Frequently Asked Questions.

We will hold an online Q&A session for all organisations interested to apply in this Request for Implementing Participants – 11/12/2025 at 13:00 CET. Visit the call website to register. Recording of the webinar will be available on the call website.

6. Eligibility, Evaluation and Selection Process

6.1. Eligibility

This call is open to organisations having the status of a legal entity operating in one of the EIT RIS country targeted by this call, listed in Section 3.2.

Please review Annex 1 for additional eligibility constraints beyond to the criteria listed below:

Organisation Eligibility	Each implementing participant must:
	• Be a legally incorporated entity in one of the EU or Horizon Europe eligible countries listed in Section 3.2. for a minimum of 3 years (from the date of the Call deadline). • Be based and operating in the country it applies to represent EIT Food. • Provide a PIC Number: https://www.eitfood.eu/files/PIC-Guidance.pdf
Application Eligibility	Each application must:
	• Be complete, with all mandatory application documents uploaded. • Be submitted on time via our submission template. • Be fully written in English.

Equal opportunity: The call is open to all applicants, including those without an existing partnership agreement with EIT Food. All members of the KIC Partnership (as defined in the Partnership Agreement) that fulfil the eligibility criteria shall have equal opportunity to participate in this call.

6.2. Evaluation Process

All submitted applications will undergo an eligibility check and evaluation to determine their feasibility and suitability for funding.

The evaluation will be conducted in three stages:

1. **Eligibility check:** During the eligibility check, if EIT Food identifies obvious or technical errors in a proposal, the applicant will be notified of this and have the opportunity to take a corrective action and resubmit their proposal within three (3) calendar days following the call submission deadline. Such errors may include system malfunctions, typos, or missing supporting documents.

This correction period is intended to ensure that minor technical issues do not unduly affect the evaluation of otherwise eligible proposals. Please note that this opportunity is strictly limited to rectifying technical errors and does not permit substantive changes to the proposal content.

2. **Selection of the best application per country (Stage 1):** Each proposal will be evaluated by an evaluation panel consisting of three external evaluator based on the criteria listed in Section 6.2.1.

The ranking of applications for each country will be decided based on the consensus score of the evaluation panel. In the case where two applications receive a similar score, the evaluation panel may decide to request an interview with the applicants.

If every application from a specific country score below the minimum threshold for a single criterion (3) or below the total weighted score (3.5), there will be no applications from this country advancing to the next evaluation stage.

3. **Selection of the funded applications (Stage 2):** All applicants shortlisted for Stage 2 will be invited to an interview (see Section 5.1 for the schedule). In addition to the assessment by external

evaluators, shortlisted applications will also be reviewed by internal evaluator(s) to determine strategic portfolio fit (see Section 6.2.1). The resulting score of the internal review will be added to the scores obtained in Stage 1 of the evaluation respecting the adjusted weights of each criterion.

Following the final ranking, up to 15 highest-scoring applications will be proposed for funding. If any selected applicant withdraws during the onboarding process, the next highest-ranking application may be selected.

All external evaluators of EIT Food have been selected in an open and transparent process and are trained extensively on the European Union's Code of Conduct for Evaluators, namely on the importance of transparency, fair treatment of all applicants, confidentiality and how to avoid conflict of interest. Evaluators must contractually agree to recuse themselves in the event of a conflict of interest.

6.2.1. Evaluation Criteria

The selection process is implemented as a Request for Proposals using the following criteria and weighting in the assessment of the applications. In case of a consortium, the criteria will be assessed by looking at the joint experience of both organisations.

Criteria	Sub criteria	Score
Excellence Stage 1: 30% Stage 2: 25%	• Understanding of the national agrifood innovation ecosystem: The proposal demonstrates a clear understanding of the country's agrifood innovation landscape, including key actors, ecosystem dynamics, challenges, and opportunities. • Relevance and strength of prior experience: The Applicant's past activities and role in the ecosystem demonstrate strong alignment with the requirements listed in Section 3.2.	1-5
Impact Stage 1: 40% Stage 2: 25%	• Ambition and contribution to the national agrifood ecosystem: The extent to which the proposal aims to create value for the country's agrifood ecosystem and demonstrates alignment and potential synergies with relevant national or regional programmes, strategies, and initiatives. • Contribution to increased visibility and engagement with EIT Food and the EIT Community: The proposal shows credible ways to strengthen awareness, recognition and participation in EIT Food network and activities among startups, researchers, industry and public actors in the country.	1-5
Quality and efficiency of the implementation Stage 1: 30% Stage 2: 25%	• Coherence and feasibility of the Action Plan: The proposed activities, KPI targets, timelines and communication/ engagement approach are logically connected and realistic, showing a clear pathway to achieving the expected results. The planned budget allocation is reasonable. • Operational capacity to deliver the role: The applicant demonstrates sufficient staff allocation with relevant qualifications. • (For consortium applications) Added value of consortium composition: The consortium member contributes distinct and necessary capabilities, with clear roles and coordination arrangements that enhance delivery.	1-5

KIC portfolio strategic fit Stage 2: 25%	- Contribution to improving the geographical coverage of EIT Food activities, particularly in countries and regions where participation in EIT Food programmes is currently limited. Added value of the proposed activities and KPI targets to the EIT Food portfolio.	1-5
---	---	-----

Each evaluation sub-criterion will be scored from 1 to 5 using the following scoring system.

Score	Explanation	Description
1	Poor	The criterion is inadequately addressed, or there are serious inherent weaknesses
2	Fair	Application broadly addresses the criterion but there are significant weaknesses
3	Good	Application addresses the criterion well, but a number of shortcomings are present
4	Very good	Application addresses the criterion very well, but a small number of shortcomings are present
5	Excellent	Application successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion. Any shortcomings are minor.

NOTE: Any application where any criterion is scored below 3 will not be considered for funding. The quality threshold for selection is a total weighted score of 3.5. The top highest-scoring applications will be selected.

All applicants will be alerted in writing about the outcome of their proposal.

The recipients of EIT Funding must take all measures to promote equal opportunities between men and women in the implementation of the action and, where applicable, in line with the gender equality plan. They must aim, to the extent possible, for a gender balance at all levels of personnel assigned to the action, including at supervisory and managerial level.

6.3. Appeal on Evaluation Results

Applicants can submit an appeal within 5 calendar days of receiving their result, if:

- The evaluation of their proposal has not been carried out in accordance with the procedures set out in this document.

For more details, please refer to [EIT Food Redress guidance](#).

ANNEX 1 – Eligibility

Please Note:

1. Failing any of the above call specific criteria will make your application ineligible. If an applicant is ineligible, the participant will be informed.

2. [According to EU policies and measures](#), Russian entities will not be authorised to participate in any new grant under the EU Research and Innovation programmes. This ban applies not only to their potential participation as beneficiaries, but to their potential participation in any kind of role: beneficiaries, linked third parties/affiliated entities, subcontractors, in-kind contributors, international partners/associated partners, and third parties receiving financial support. Find the full statement from the European Commission [here](#).

3. Pursuant to Article 2 (2) of the [Decision 2022/2506](#) of 15 December 2022 on measures for the protection of the Union budget against breaches of the principles of the rule of law in Hungary *where the Commission implements the Union budget in direct or indirect management pursuant to of Article 62(1) points (a) and (c), of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046, no legal commitments shall be entered into with any public interest trust established on the basis of the Hungarian Act IX of 2021 or any entity maintained by such a public interest trust*. This prohibition applies to financial support to third parties (sub-grants and prizes), hence the proposal of any entity or group of entities where a Participant is included in the list of public interest trusts shall be considered as not eligible.

4. Applicants will be deemed ineligible if:

a. bankrupt, subject to insolvency or winding-up procedures, where its assets are being administered by a liquidator or by a court, where it is in an arrangement with creditors, where its business Activities are suspended, or where it is in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for under national laws or regulations;

b. it has been established by a final judgment or a final administrative decision that the organisation is in breach of its obligations relating to the payment of taxes or social security contributions in accordance with the applicable law;

c. it has been established by a final judgment or a final administrative decision that the organisation is guilty of grave professional misconduct by having violated applicable laws or regulations or ethical standards of the profession to which the organisation belongs, or by having engaged in any wrongful conduct which has an impact on its professional credibility where such conduct denotes a wrongful intent or gross negligence;

d. is found to be attempting to influence the decision-making process of the call during the process;

e. attempting to obtain confidential information that may confer upon its undue advantages in the call process;

f. it has been established by a final judgment that the organisation is guilty of fraud, corruption or money laundering.

ANNEX 2 – Administrative matters

Onboarding

Entities that have never been part of projects funded by the EIT Food and that do not have a PIC validated by the Research Executive Agency of the European Commission will be subject to a PIC validation process managed by the EIT Community Onboarding Service. All validated entities will proceed with the signature of legal agreements with EIT Food.

As part of the onboarding process, selected entities must:

- Sign and submit the Declaration of Size.
- Sign and submit the Financial Information Form.
- Register on EIT Food grants management platform.

Additionally, EIT Food reserves the right to request the EIT Community Onboarding Service a Financial Assessment Capacity to check the financial capacity of any entity of a selected proposal. In such case, EIT Food may require:

- an enhanced financial responsibility regime, i.e. joint and several liability for all subgrantees or joint and several liabilities of Affiliated Entities (if any)
- prefinancing paid in instalments (multiple/additional prefinancing)
- (one or more) prefinancing guarantees or
- propose no prefinancing or
- request that the entity be replaced or, if needed, might reject the entire proposal

In other words, if the assessment results are not satisfactory, the EIT Food might reject the participation of this entity and will then check whether the proposal is still eligible.

For further information on the project implementation, please read the [EIT Food Activity Implementation Guidelines for Participants](#).

EIT Food Legal Framework & Legal Documents to be signed

Selected applicants will receive a second communication with instructions regarding the completion of the following documents, as well as agreeing to EIT Food's conflict of interest policy:

To be signed between the participant and EIT Food:

1. Framework Agreement
2. Project Agreement
3. Any other legal agreements or documents to make this grant eligible.

Payment Schedule

EIT Food will transfer funding in instalments. A proportion of the Activity budget will be prefinanced, with subsequent payments being linked to the completion of deliverables and accountable KPIs. The majority of the grant will be transferred at the end of the Activity, once eligible costs have been determined and following the completion of final Activity reporting and the fulfilment of all obligations specified in the Project Agreement.

NOTE: The amount and timing of funding is dependent on the dispersal of funds to EIT Food from the EIT.

Monitoring

The project will be monitored and may be audited. All Activities selected for funding undergo continuous monitoring by EIT Food to ensure effective progress and implementation in accordance with the Project Agreement.

EIT Food may request regular reporting of actual costs incurred with the subgrant, as well as regular reporting of KPIs and deliverables, together with the supporting documentation. The monitoring process may result in an amendment to the Activity workplan and/or budget.

In the case of under-performance, significant delay of implementation, misconduct, misalignment with the project specifications in the grant management system or any other reason jeopardizing the timely implementation of the Activity identified during the monitoring process, EIT Food reserves the right to discontinue or restructure the funding of the Activity at any point during the Activity duration.

A formal ex-post impact assessment within at least five years of the end of the activity and its outputs is required for each activity, including those implemented by third parties.

ANNEX 3 - History of Changes

Version	Publication Date	Changes