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Open call for proposals

European Agri-Food Biotech Member State Engagement – Food, Feed and Biosolutions

Call ID: EIT Food/ European Agri-Food Biotech Member State Engagement /2026 - SEGMENT/01

EIT Food

LEUVEN | 23.11.2026

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EIT Food is supported by the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT), a body of the European Union

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1. Introduction

1. About EIT Food - Vision and focus

Over the next decade, we will advocate for a bold transformation of Europe's food system, so that future generations can eat healthy, sustainable food. Through our community, we will fundamentally redesign the way food is produced, distributed, and consumed, so that by 2030 we have viable pathways to transformation at scale, and by 2035 we see tangible change across the food value chain.

Supported by the EU, we invest in projects, organisations and individuals that share our goals for a healthy and sustainable food system. Our innovation projects are delivered with a combination of industry, education and research partners to improve environmental and health outcomes by developing solutions that align with our missions and priority areas:

1. Healthier Lives Through Food

We will make a material difference to quality of life by enabling more consumers to have better choices through access to affordable, healthier food products and actionable information.

2. Food System Resilience

We'll improve food security and safety for consumers everywhere by enabling and establishing resilient and dependably digitally enabled food supply chains.

3. Net Zero Food System

We will enable the transition to a net zero food system, measuring and quantifying the change through reduced CO2 equivalent emissions.

2. Overview of key information on the call

Call ID	EIT Food/ European Agri-Food Biotech Member State Engagement /2026 - SEGMENT/01
Call opening and deadline for applications	Call opening: 23 November 2026 Deadline for applications: Fist cut-off: 12:00 CET on 22 January 2027 Second cut-off: 30 May 2027* ** Subject to successful performance of the first cut-off*
Evaluation and implementation timeline (indicative)	Eligibility and Remote Evaluation of proposals: By February 5 Interviews/Panels: Week 8 February Communication of results to applicants: February 15 Tentative project start: April 2027 Tentative project end: December 2027 (subject to contracting timeline).
Maximum funding allocated to this call	**Call funding:** Up to EUR 1.200,000 of EIT Food funding is available, EUR 600,000 for each cut-off. The maximum total budget per project is **EUR 300,000**. The maximum EIT Food funding rate under this call is 50% of the total project budget. Applicants must provide co-funding covering at least the remaining 50%.
List of call documents	Application form as available on the submission platform: MyEITFood Portal Framework Agreement KAVA Contract Other relevant documents available at call webpage in EIT Food Open Calls.
Topics to be addressed	European Agri-Food Biotech Member State Engagement across food, feed and biosolutions: Member State mobilisation; ministry and institutional engagement; national coalition building; policy and regulatory action; ecosystem activation; evidence and narrative development; securing

	Member State endorsement for a future Joint Undertaking in agri-food and feed biotechnology; and translation of national priorities into coordinated EU-level action. Applications are open only to consortia comprising legal entities established in at least three different EU Member States from the same geographical cluster (see Annex 5). Each proposal must cover at least three EU Member States and demonstrate strong representation, ministry access and confirmed co-funding.
Contact point Q&A	Lorena.savani@eitfood.eu
Further information to interested applicants	EIT Food intends to organise an applicant information session/webinar and publish Q&A/FAQs on the call webpage. Dates and details TBC.

3. Description of the subject matter of the call

1. Purpose and scope of activities

Europe has world-class research, startup and industrial capabilities in agri-food biotechnology across food, feed and biosolutions. These include fermentation, new and improved ingredients, microorganisms, biocontrol and biofertilisers, biomass valorisation, plant molecular farming, new genomic techniques and other biological solutions. Yet many European innovations struggle to progress from research to commercial and industrial deployment. Regulatory uncertainty, limited demonstration capacity, fragmented investment and uneven Member State support encourage companies and talent to scale elsewhere.

Why Member State Engagement is needed

The conditions that determine whether agri-food biotechnology can scale are shaped both at European level and within individual Member States. National ministries, agencies, permanent representations and ecosystem actors influence regulatory pathways, research and innovation priorities, public investment, industrial deployment and participation in European initiatives. At the same time, Member States have distinct agri-food biotech strengths, strategic value chains, barriers and investment needs. A structured engagement mechanism can help countries advance these national priorities while connecting them to relevant European opportunities, partners, funding and policy developments.

The period ahead is particularly important because decisions on the next EU research and innovation framework, FP10 and the Multiannual Financial Framework, biotechnology policy, regulatory reform and future European Partnerships will shape investment conditions for years. The programme will help participating Member States identify where their national priorities can benefit from, and contribute to, these European developments. It will also generate evidence on areas of common interest, including the potential added value of a future Joint Undertaking in agri-food and feed biotechnology supporting research, demonstration, scale-up and industrial deployment.

Programme value proposition - a two-way model

The European Agri-Food Biotech Member State Engagement Initiative is designed as a two-way value proposition. It will support participating Member States in identifying, strengthening and advancing their own agri-food biotech priorities, while connecting those priorities to European networks, investment, regulatory, research and innovation opportunities. Selected consortium will work with relevant national stakeholders, based on a specific Geographical Cluster (see Annex 5), to develop a tailored strategy based on each country's capabilities, strategic needs and opportunities. Country-level evidence and priorities will then inform a common European framework coordinated by EIT Food and connected to the European Agri-Food Biotech Alliance.

Each consortium must cover between two to four different EU Member States from within the same geographical cluster. The 4 geographical clusters are: Northern & Baltic Europe, Western & Central Europe, Central-Eastern & South-Eastern Europe & Southern & Mediterranean Europe (see Annex 5). These clusters have been established to facilitate cooperation among countries with shared regional contexts and challenges, while promoting broad and balanced participation across the EU.

Value and return for participating Member States

The initiative is designed to create direct value for participating Member States, not only to connect national actors to a European agenda. Each supported country should define the national priorities, strategic value chains, barriers or opportunities that the action will help advance. The programme should then use EIT Food's European reach, the European Agri-Food Biotech Alliance and the selected applicant's national capabilities to connect those priorities with relevant expertise, partnerships, funding and European-level opportunities.

Expected value for Member States may include: advancing national agri-food biotech strategies and priority value chains; mobilising ministries, agencies, industry, research, startups, farmers, investors and other actors around shared priorities; identifying pathways to European research, demonstration, scale-up and deployment funding; connecting national actors to European expertise and industrial or investment networks; identifying regulatory and deployment barriers and potential solutions; strengthening national evidence and investment cases; and ensuring that national needs and capabilities are visible in the development of future European initiatives.

Applicants must therefore articulate a clear value proposition for Member States proposed, including the national priorities to be supported, the expected benefit for the country, the stakeholders that will be mobilised and the concrete outputs or opportunities that the action is expected to generate.

What the initiative will achieve

The initiative aims to: help participating Member States identify and advance national agri-food biotech priorities; mobilise durable national ecosystems and collaboration around those priorities; connect Member States to relevant European funding, investment, regulatory, research and innovation opportunities; improve enabling conditions for innovation deployment; strengthen national and European investment in research, demonstration, scale-up and first industrial deployment; generate evidence and practical recommendations from country-level implementation; and identify areas of shared European interest, including Member State perspectives on a potential future Joint Undertaking in agri-food and feed biotechnology.

Consortia must demonstrate meaningful representation and established access to relevant ministries, public authorities and ecosystem actors in every country proposed. Each application must provide a distinct rationale, stakeholder map, action plan, budget and co-funding commitment.

Illustrative activities may include national stakeholder roundtables; bilateral briefings and working sessions with ministries, agencies, permanent representations and other public authorities; national priority and value-chain mapping; coalition and ecosystem building; policy, regulatory, investment and implementation recommendations; study visits; evidence generation; strategic communication and narrative activities; and engagement with industry, farmers, research organisations, startups, investors and other relevant stakeholders. Activities must respond to national priorities and circumstances, demonstrate value for the participating Member State, and connect relevant country-level opportunities to the wider European framework rather than being delivered as a standardised roadshow.

This call constitutes the first implementation cut-off. Subject to results, lessons learned, strategic need and additional funding, EIT Food may launch a second competitive cut-off to extend the model to further Member States. Participation in the first cut-off creates no automatic entitlement to future funding.

2. Main requirements for applicants

Applicants must apply **as consortia comprising two to four legal entities established in two to four different EU Member States within the same geographical cluster**. Each Member State covered by the proposal must be represented by at least one consortium member established in that country and responsible for the activities delivered there. Applications from single legal entities are not eligible.

Eligible consortium members may include foundations, non-profit organisations, industry or sector associations, research and innovation organisations, ecosystem organisations, policy organisations, and other entities with demonstrable national delivery capacity.

For each Member State proposed, applicants must demonstrate: an established national presence or credible delivery network; established relationships and experience engaging relevant ministries, government agencies, public authorities and ecosystem actors; strong relationships across the biotechnology and agri-food ecosystem; understanding of the country's policy, regulatory, industrial and

innovation context; ability to identify and respond to national priorities; and the operational capacity to deliver and document the proposed action plan.

Applications must provide a separate country rationale, stakeholder and ministry engagement map, action plan, milestones and KPIs for each country. Applicants must also explain how national outputs will contribute to the common European programme and the European Agri-Food Biotech Alliance.

Applicants must demonstrate secured or credibly committed co-funding covering at least 50% of the total eligible budget. They must identify the funding source, the entity responsible for managing it and the activities it will finance. EIT Food-funded costs and externally financed costs must be clearly separated, with no double funding or duplicate claiming.

3. Main requirements for project implementation

3.1. Project duration and implementation

The indicative implementation period of the first cut-off is from April 2027 to December 2027. A second cut-off will be open in May 2027, subject to the successful performance of cut-off 1, strategic need and availability of additional funding; any continuation will be subject to a new competitive process and will not be automatic.

Selected applicants will implement national action plans within a common European Agri-Food Biotech Member State Engagement framework coordinated by EIT Food. EIT Food will provide strategic direction, portfolio coordination, links to the European Agri-Food Biotech Alliance and connections to relevant European opportunities. Selected applicants will lead country delivery and engagement with national public authorities and ecosystem actors, ensuring that activities create tangible value for participating Member States.

3.2. Deliverables

Grant recipients must submit project deliverables. For this activity the deliverables include:

Deliverable	Description
D1 – Member State Strategy, Coalition, Implementation & Dissemination Plan (Due M3)	**Planning:** For each selected Member State, provide a strategic opportunity assessment, ministry and stakeholder map, and coalition, engagement, implementation and dissemination plans. Define country-tailored activities, responsibilities, milestones and KPI targets, including engagement with ministries, agencies and ecosystem actors to mobilise stakeholders, strengthen institutional engagement and seek support for a future Agri-Food & Feed Biotech Joint Undertaking. Cover communications and outreach.
D2 – Country Results, Synthesis, Endorsement & Recommendations (Due M8)	**Results:** For each selected Member State, report delivery and results against D1 milestones and KPI targets by M8, explaining deviations and remaining activities. Evidence coalition mobilisation, institutional engagement, EIT Food and externally funded activities, and communication, dissemination and visibility. Synthesise national priorities, institutional signals, lessons, transferable approaches and recommendations, including documented support and, where achievable, formal endorsement for a future Agri-Food & Feed Biotech Joint Undertaking and perspectives on its scope and priorities. Publish through EC dissemination tools such as the Horizon Results Platform.

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.

3.3. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

For the European Agri-Food Biotech Member State Engagement activity, the programme KPIs below will apply in addition to any relevant EIT Core KPIs confirmed before publication:

KPI Code	KPI description	Minimum target expected
Programme KPI 1	Member States with an approved and implemented national Agri-Food Biotech Member State Engagement action plan	Minimum 3 per proposal; separate approved action plan for every supported Member State; target of 8 Member States across the first-wave portfolio
Programme KPI 2	National coalitions mobilised with participation from relevant public, industry, research/innovation and ecosystem actors	At least 1 per supported Member State
Programme KPI 3	High-level policy/institutional engagements delivered and evidenced	Minimum targets proposed for each Member State, including engagement with relevant ministries or public authorities; assessed for ambition and credibility
Programme KPI 4	Concrete national policy signals/outputs generated (e.g. recommendations, statements, commitments, formal inputs)	At least 1 substantive national policy, investment or institutional output per supported Member State
Programme KPI 5	External non-EU financing mobilised and evidenced for the programme	At least 50% of the total eligible budget for equivalent to the EIT Food contribution requested and evidenced
Programme KPI 6	EU-level synthesis translating Member State evidence, endorsements and Member State signals into a coordinated European synthesis of Member State priorities, evidence and perspectives, including the potential role of a future Joint Undertaking in agri-food and feed biotechnology and related European priorities	At least 1 coordinated European output, with documented documented Member State perspectives and support where relevant and appropriate
EIT Core KPIs	# Results disseminated through the EC dissemination tools [EITHE16]	1

Please note: At the end of the funding period, EIT Food requires specific structured data and documentation to verify the achievement of KPIs. Grantees must report their KPI achievements through the grant management tool and ensure that all required structured data and supporting evidence is submitted in accordance with the guidelines provided (see EIT Food KPI Guidance Document for details).

3.4. Monitoring and reporting

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 KPIs and deliverables, together with the supporting documentation. The monitoring process may result in an amendment to the Activity workplan and/or budget.

Beneficiaries must retain sufficient evidence demonstrating the proper implementation of the activities and achievement of the agreed deliverables and/or results. Evidence may include, as applicable, technical outputs, reports, agendas and minutes, attendance records, presentations, photographs or other media, dissemination materials, links to outputs, and documentation of tests, pilots or demonstrations. Such evidence must be made available upon request for checks, reviews or audits.

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.

4. Financial aspects of the call

1. KIC funding, co-funding rate and cost eligibility

The total funding in this call is EUR 1,200,000 (with EUR 600,000 allocated to each cut-off).

The maximum total budget **per project** must be up to EUR 300,000. The EIT Food contribution may cover a maximum of 50% of the total budget per project. Applicants must provide co-funding covering at least the remaining 50%.

Each consortium proposal must cover between two to four EU Member States.

The projects selected in the first cut-off run from April 2027 to December 2027, subject to the final contracting timeline.

This funding is implemented under EIT GA 101269771 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.

In addition to the guidance provided by Horizon Europe, the proposals must comply with the following maximum thresholds:

- Subcontracting can amount to a maximum of 20% of total eligible costs, subject to EIT Food Legal/Grants confirmation and Horizon Europe procurement requirements.
- Participants are not permitted to give a subgrant to another third party.

Awarded beneficiaries and consortia must comply with applicable procurement rules, including fair competition, equal treatment and avoidance of conflicts of interest.

Applicants must demonstrate external non-EU financing at least equivalent to the EIT Food contribution requested.

The proposal must present one coherent programme plan while clearly separating the two funding streams. It must identify which activities and costs are financed by EIT Food and which are financed directly by the donor, partner or applicant. Other EU funding cannot be used as co-funding for the same eligible costs, and no cost, activity or output may be funded or claimed twice.

Co-funding must be supported by evidence, which may include a signed commitment letter or equivalent accounting records.

2. Payment arrangements

EIT Food will disburse funding in instalments. A proportion of the Activity budget will be pre-financed based on the company size, with subsequent annual payments linked to the eligible costs reported by the recipient. For more information, check the EIT Food Payments Schedule.

3. Financial sustainability requirements

The call is designed to use EIT Food funding as a catalyst for matching external investment and to establish a repeatable European programme model. It builds on EIT Food's Biotech Portfolio, developed through the Biotech Alliance, a network of with public and private-sector partners that supports biotech innovation in Europe. Through partnership fees, joint funding proposals, and other activities, the Alliance also contributes to EIT Food's long-term financial sustainability.

5. Call criteria

Following the deadline for submission, the admissibility, eligibility, exclusion and selection criteria checks will be performed for each proposal in line with the following criteria.

1. Admissibility

Please note that completing the following two steps is a mandatory prerequisite for submitting an application for EIT Food Calls.

- First, applicants must register their organisation on the EU Funding & Tenders Portal in order to obtain a unique nine-digit Participant Identification Code (PIC); if unsure whether a PIC already exists, organisations can verify their registration directly via the EU Portal.
- Second, applicants must register, access and complete their submission through the platform MyEITFood.eu.

Only proposals complying with the following conditions will be considered admissible for further evaluation:

Applications must be submitted in English before the call deadline, submitted using the forms provided inside MyEITFood.eu, complete and contain all parts and mandatory annexes and supporting documents.

Any proposals submitted after the deadline will be inadmissible.

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) shall have equal opportunity to participate in this funding opportunity.

2. Entities eligible to participate and eligibility for funding

Any legal entity, established in any of the 27 EU Member states is **eligible to participate**, provided that the conditions laid down in the Horizon Europe Regulation have been met (e.g. the entity is not under EU sanction, please refer to annex 2 and 3), along with any other conditions laid down in the specific call/topic.

For this call, a 'legal entity' means legal person created and recognised as such under national law, EU law or international law, which has legal personality and which may, acting in its own name, exercise rights and be subject to obligations, or an entity without legal personality.

Only proposals satisfying all the eligibility criteria shall pass on to the selection and evaluation stages.

3. Consortium composition

Applications may only be submitted by consortia comprising between two to four legal entities established in different EU Member States from the same geographical cluster. Applications from single legal entities are not eligible. One entity must act as Coordinator and the roles, budgets, Member State responsibilities and external financing contributions must be clearly defined. At least two sides of the EIT Knowledge Triangle should be represented in the proposed stakeholder/implementation model.

4. Award criteria

4.1. Award criteria, subcriteria and maximum scores

The following criteria and weighting will be used in the assessment:

a) Excellence (25%)	Maximum score
Strategic quality of the proposed Member State approach Clear rationale for each country; understanding of the political, regulatory and ecosystem context; credible ministry and authority engagement pathway; and well-defined national priorities and intended outcomes.	1-5

Quality and relevance of the engagement methodology Country-tailored, coalition-led approach; appropriate mix of engagement, evidence and narrative activities; clear focus across food, feed and/or biosolutions; avoids a generic roadshow model.	1-5
The proposal demonstrates how gender and diversity dimensions are considered in the methodology, data management, stakeholder engagement and implementation approach.	1-5
b) Impact (30%)	Maximum score
Member State and ecosystem impact potential Credible pathway to stronger Member State engagement, national priority delivery, regulatory enabling conditions, investment mobilisation and durable national coalitions, including a credible approach to demonstrate value for the Member State and document national priorities and perspectives on future European mechanisms, including a potential Joint Undertaking.	1-5
European leverage and scalability Strength of the link from national action to EU-level engagement; potential to generate transferable evidence, durable coalitions and a model that can be extended to additional Member States in the future.	1-5
c) Quality and efficiency of implementation (25%)	Maximum score
Value for money and co-funding robustness Proportionate country budgets; credible verification; no double funding; and strong additionality and return for both participating Member States and EIT Food; Proposals securing at least 50% co-funding; more than 50% co-funding will be positively assessed, demonstrating stronger financial leverage and commitment from external partners	1-5
Delivery capacity and governance Demonstrated representation and ministry access in each proposed Member State; clear roles and decision-making; effective coordination with the donor or partner and EIT Food; and robust risk management.	1-5
d) Strategic fit (20%) KIC portfolio strategic fit, financial sustainability	**Maximum score**
Alignment with EIT Food and the European Agri-Food Biotech Alliance Contribution to resilient, sustainable and competitive agri-food systems and to coordinated European action on biotechnology for food, feed and biosolutions. Portfolio considerations, including geographical coverage, complementarity between activities, stakeholder mobilisation and avoidance of duplication.	1-5
Financial sustainability and ecosystem integration Ability to leverage EIT Food funding, mobilise additional non-EU resources and connect industry, research/innovation, public authorities and other relevant actors.	1-5

Each evaluation criteria will be scored from 1 to 5 using the following scoring system.

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.

The quality threshold for selection is a total weighted score of 3.5.

6. Evaluation procedure

1. Admissibility and eligibility, exclusion and selection stages

This funding opportunity follows the timeline below:

Call Open Date	23 November 2026
Call Deadline	12:00 CET 22 January 2027
Eligibility and Remote evaluation	22 January – 5 February 2027
Interviews/Panels	From February 8 to 12 December 2027
Communication to applicants	15 February 2027
Standstill period, Onboarding, Validation and Contracting	15 February 2027 – 31 March 2027
Indicative start of project implementation	1 April 2027

2. Evaluation of proposals

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

During the eligibility check, if EIT Food identifies obvious or technical errors in a proposal, applicant will have the opportunity to correct or resubmit their proposal within three (3) calendar days following the call submission deadline. Such errors may include system malfunctions, typos, or missing supporting documents.

The correction window is intended to ensure that these 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 modifications to the proposal content.

The evaluation will be conducted by 3 external evaluators and 1 internal evaluator, based on the criteria specified in section 5.4.1 (Award criteria, subcriteria and maximum scores). External evaluators score the award criteria Excellence, Quality and Efficiency of Implementation and Impact. Internal evaluators only score Strategic Fit. The internal evaluator score does not outweigh the external assessment.

The evaluation consists of a remote evaluation phase where internal and external evaluators conduct their assessment based on the stated criteria, followed by an interview with the same evaluators. Based on the results of the remote evaluation, the 2 highest-scoring proposals per geographical cluster will be shortlisted and invited to an interview with the same evaluators. Evaluators have the possibility to revisit their scores given under section 5.4.1. (Award criteria, subcriteria and maximum scores) after the interview. Final scores will be run after interview to establish the ranking. **The highest-ranked proposal in each geographical cluster will be selected for funding first.** All remaining proposals will then be placed on a single ranking list based on their final scores, irrespective of geographical cluster, and funded in descending order of score until the available budget is exhausted.

All external evaluators have been selected in an open and transparent process. All evaluators, both internal and external, 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. EIT Food aims for representation of either women or men not falling below 40% as a parity threshold within evaluation committees.

Expert evaluators are obliged to use the Horizon Dashboard during the assessment and to provide evidenced justification on the assessment of the proposal's budgets.

3. Communication of evaluation results to applicants

3.1. Communication of evaluation results

Following the award decision, all applicants shall be informed of the result in writing. All applicants shall receive their assessment, in the format of evaluation summary report, including their score.

Successful proposals will be invited to the financial support agreement preparation stage/onboarding.

3.2. Requirements for selected proposals

If the proposal is selected, the communication on the evaluation results may include a set of recommendations/conditions as a result of the outcome of the evaluation. These requirements may not entail a substantial modification of the proposal.

If the applicant fails to comply with the provided recommendations/conditions or does not respond in the time allocated, the EIT Food reserves the right to withdraw the conditional notification. Should this occur, the next proposal will be contacted following the ranking list.

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 (REA) of the European Commission will be subject to a PIC validation process.

As part of the onboarding process, selected entities must:

- Sign and submit the Declaration of Size.
- Sign and submit the Financial Information Form.
- Sign the Declaration of Honour (DoH) in accordance with the EU Financial Regulation.
- 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, EIT Food might reject the participation of this entity and will then check whether the proposal is still eligible.

For further information on the implementation of the project, please read the EIT Food Activity Implementation Guidelines for Participants.

3.3. Standstill period

The standstill period is a set time after funding selection for appeals, final administrative checks, and compliance in the award process.

The project cannot start before this period. The standstill period of 30 days applies to this call.

3.4. Appeal process

Applicants can submit an appeal within 15 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.

4. Support

If you have any questions about this call, please contact the call manager Lorena.savani@eitfood.eu

Please visit our website for any updates to this call and information about upcoming events to support your application. You will also find our list of Frequently Asked Questions.

7. EIT Food Legal Framework & Legal Documents to be signed

1. Contracting

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:

Framework Agreement
KAVA Contract

For consortium-based projects, payments will only be made once all contracts have been signed.

2. Consortium Agreement

It is highly recommended that this document be signed by all members of the consortium.

It is suggested to consider using the DESCA model as a framework for the consortium agreement.

Any other legal agreements to make this grant eligible.

Annexes

1. Annex 1 - Information on the EIT

1. European Institute of Innovation and Technology

The European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) is a **European Union body** with a legal personality and a wide legal capacity accorded to legal persons under national law. The EIT was created in 2008 by the European Union (EU) to enhance Europe's global competitiveness by fostering collaboration between businesses, research institutions, and higher education organizations.

The EIT is governed by Regulation (EU) 2021/695 (EIT Regulation), which aligns the EIT's mission with the EU's priorities and the objectives of Horizon Europe on evolving research, innovation, economic growth, job creation, global competitiveness, sustainable growth, higher education and entrepreneurship, by means of the Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs), which address specific societal challenges and are established and supported by the EIT.

The EIT Strategic Innovation Agenda (SIA) 2021-2027 is aligned with Horizon Europe and lays down the priority fields and the strategy of the EIT for future initiatives, capacity to generate the best innovation added-value, objectives, key actions, mode of operation, expected results, impact, as well as an estimate of the resources needed for the duration of Horizon Europe.

Horizon Europe Regulation

The Horizon Europe Regulation (EU) 2021/695 foresees that the EIT takes part in the implementation of the Horizon Europe Programme in accordance with its strategic objectives for the period 2021 to 2027, as laid down in the Strategic Innovation Agenda of the EIT, and taking into account the strategic planning of Horizon Europe.

EIT and Knowledge and Innovation Community (KIC) relations

The EIT Regulation defines KICs as large-scale Institutionalised European Partnerships of higher education institutions, research organisations, companies and other stakeholders in the innovation process in the form of a strategic network, regardless of its legal form, based on joint mid- to long-term innovation planning to meet the EIT's challenges and contribute to attaining the objectives established.

According to the EIT Regulation, and without prejudice to the partnership agreements and grant agreements between the EIT and each KIC, the KICs have substantial autonomy to establish their internal organisation and composition, as well as their agenda and working methods, provided that they result in progress towards achieving the objectives of the EIT and the KICs, taking into account the strategic planning of Horizon Europe and the strategic direction of the EIT set out in the SIA and by the Governing Board.

2. Contractual framework between the EIT and the KICs

The long-term relations between the EIT and each KIC are based on a **seven-year Partnership Agreement** (PA)[1] laying down the general terms and conditions under which the KIC operates as an Institutionalised European Partnership. Subject to positive performance, interim review and outcome of comprehensive assessment of the KIC, the PA can be extended for another period of a maximum of seven years.

The EIT signed a framework partnership agreement with EIT Food on 1 March 2018, with retroactive effect as of 1 January 2018.

The **Grant Agreement** (GA)[2] is the contractual instrument laying down the provisions concerning the implementation of the KIC activities (KIC Business Plan, Cross-KIC activities, etc.) through grants, on an annual or multi-annual basis of up to three years with the KICs. Business plans describe the main objectives and expected results and actions taken by the KICs.

The Grant Agreement 2026-2028 between the EIT and EIT Food entered into force on April 7th 2026, with effect from the action start date of 1 January 2026.

[1] Model Partnership Agreement: Partnership Agreement

[2] Horizon Europe Model Grant Agreement: general-mga_horizon-euratom_en.pdf

Contractual framework between the KIC and the subgrantees

In accordance with the Grant Agreement (Annex 5), the KIC launches calls (i.e. open calls or KIC partnership calls) in order to select projects or award prizes. The KIC awards a "financial support to third parties" (i.e. the so called "subgrants" and "prizes") for the implementation of these projects and signs **subgrant agreements** ("Financial Support Agreements") with the selected entities or consortia.

2. Annex 2 - EU restrictions on participation

1. EU restrictive measures

Entities subject to EU restrictive measures under Article 29 of the Treaty on the European Union (TEU) and Article 215 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (TFEU)[3] as well as Article 75 TFEU[4], are not eligible to participate in any capacity, including as beneficiaries, affiliated entities, associated partners, third parties giving in-kind contributions, subcontractors or recipients of financial support to third parties (if any).

Special rules also apply to entities covered by Commission Guidelines No 2013/C 205/0522[5].

2. Legal entities established in Russia, Belarus, or in non-government controlled territories of Ukraine

Given the illegal invasion of Ukraine by Russia and the involvement of Belarus, there is currently no appropriate context allowing the implementation of the actions foreseen in this programme with legal entities established in Russia, Belarus, or in non-government controlled territories of Ukraine. Therefore, even where such entities are not subject to EU restrictive measures, such legal entities are not eligible to participate in any capacity. This includes participation as beneficiaries, affiliated entities, associated partners, third parties giving in-kind contributions, subcontractors or recipients of financial support to third parties (if any). Exceptions may be granted on a case-by-case basis for justified reasons.

With specific regard to measures addressed to Russia, following the adoption of the Council Regulation (EU) 2024/1745 of 24 June 2024[6] (amending Council Regulation (EU) No 833/2014 of 31 July 2014) concerning restrictive measures in view of Russia's actions destabilising the situation in Ukraine, legal entities established outside Russia but whose proprietary rights are directly or indirectly owned for more than 50% by a legal person, entity or body established in Russia are also not eligible to participate in any capacity.

3. Restrictions for the protection of European communication networks

The protection of European communication networks has been identified as an important security interest of the Union and its Member States[7]. For further information, please refer to the Horizon Europe, Work Programme 2025, General Annexes, B – Eligibility on page 14[8].

[3] Please note that the EU Official Journal contains the official list and, in case of conflict, its content prevails over that of the EU Sanctions Map

[4] Please note that the EU Official Journal contains the official list and, in case of conflict, its content prevails over that of the EU Sanctions Map

[5] Commission guidelines No 2013/C 205/05 on the eligibility of Israeli entities and their activities in the territories occupied by Israel since June 1967 for grants, prizes and financial instruments funded by the EU from 2014 onwards (OJEU C 205 of 19.07.2013, pp. 9-11)

[6] OJ L 229, 31.7.2014, p. 1–11

[7] European Council conclusions of 1 and 2 October 2020 (EUCO 13/20), point 11; Council Conclusions on the significance of 5G to the European Economy and the need to mitigate security risks linked to 5G, 14517/19.

[8]

3. Annex 3 - Exclusion criteria

Applicants will be excluded from participation in the Call and from the award if they are in one of the situations referred to in Article 138(1) of the EU Financial Regulation. Applicants that are subject to EU administrative sanctions (i.e. exclusion) or are in one of the following exclusion situations that bar them from receiving EU grants can NOT participate:

- bankruptcy, winding up, affairs administered by the courts, arrangement with creditors, suspended business activities or other similar procedures (including procedures for persons with unlimited liability for the applicant's debts);
- they are in breach of social security or tax obligations (including if done by persons with unlimited liability for the applicant's debts);
- they are guilty of grave professional misconduct (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant);
- they are guilty of fraud, corruption, having links to a criminal organisation, money laundering, terrorism-related crimes (including terrorism financing), child labour or human trafficking (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant);
- they have shown significant deficiencies in complying with their main obligations under an EU procurement contract, grant agreement, prize, expert contract, or similar (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant);
- they are guilty of irregularities within the meaning of Article 1(2) of Regulation No 2988/9534 (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant); or
- they have created under a different jurisdiction an entity with the intent to circumvent fiscal, social or other legal obligations in the country of origin or created another entity with this purpose (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant).
- have misrepresented the information required as a condition for participating in the procedure or have failed to supply that information; or
- were previously involved in the preparation of documents used in the award procedure where this entails a breach of the principle of equality of treatment, including distortion of competition, that cannot be remedied otherwise.

As evidence, the applicants (i.e. the Coordinator and all the proposed partners participating in the applicant consortium) will have to submit a **declaration of honour on exclusion criteria and absence of conflict of interest**. Failure to provide adequate documentation may result in the exclusion of the applicants concerned.

Successful applicants will go through the legal entity validation process of the **Onboarding Service of the KICs (i.e. a shared service led by EIT Urban Mobility KIC)**. If not provided in the application, the Onboarding Service will request registration documents and a signed Declaration of honour from the successful applicant. The validation may also include a check of the successful applicants by the EIT in the Early Detection and Exclusion System (EDES) of the European Commission.

4. Annex 4 – Other terms and conditions

1. Acceptance of the call conditions

EIT Food reserves the right to make reasonable amendments and additions to the call conditions. Amendments and additions to the call conditions shall be valid only before the submission deadline, and if made available to all potential applicants at the same time on the call page of the EIT Food Calls webpage.

EIT Food may declare the call unsuccessful in case no applications are received, if the applications do not meet the admissibility, eligibility, exclusion and selection criteria, or if none of the applications reach the thresholds laid down in this call text.

By submitting the application form, the applicant agrees to the present call conditions. Applicants agree that they have no legal entitlement to funding.

2. Cancellation of the call

EIT Food reserves the right to cancel the call at any time before the signature of the Financial Support Agreement(s) without the obligation to compensate applicants, in particular where its objectives can no longer be met, provided that the applicants are informed in a transparent manner in writing as follows:

- if the cancellation takes place before that award: on the call page of the EIT Food Calls webpage,
- if the cancellation takes place following the communication of the results to the applicants, during the standstill period, or anytime before the signature of the Financial Support Agreement: in writing directly to the selected applicants.

3. Data protection

EIT Food ensures that any processing of personal data shall be performed in accordance with Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016, on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and in accordance with Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 (General Data Protection Regulation or "GDPR"). As a data subject, you have the right of access, the right to rectification, the right to erasure, the right to restrict processing, the right to data portability, the right to object, and the right not to be subject to a decision based solely on automated processing. If you have a question about personal data processing or want to exercise your data subject rights, you can contact us at: privacy@eitfood.eu.

Personal data will be deleted 5 years after the announcement of the results of the call in case of unsuccessful applications and 7 years for successful applicants.

By submitting your application to this call, you consent that EIT Food will collect, transfer, process, store, and delete your data in accordance with the aforementioned conditions.

For more information on the processing of your personal data, please consult the privacy statement of EIT Food at: www.eitfood.eu/privacy.

4. Confidentiality

EIT Food undertakes to use any confidential information shared by the applicants solely for the purposes of the evaluation process.

Confidential information shall mean data and/or information (in any form) that is proprietary to, or possessed by, the applicants and not generally known to the public, or that has not yet been revealed whether in tangible or intangible form, that is identified as confidential in writing or when disclosed orally.

Confidential information included in the application form must be expressly labelled by the applicant as such in the form. As regards confidential information expressly labelled as such in the call process, EIT Food undertakes to (i) not disclose them in any way and any form, without the prior written authorization of the applicant; and (ii) not to use them for purposes other than those strictly necessary for participation in the call.

Confidential information may be shared among EIT Food and its subsidiaries (e.g. KIC Co-Location Centres) solely for the purposes of the call process. EIT Food undertakes to impose this confidentiality obligation on its employees and the employees of its subsidiaries and its collaborators, as well as on independent experts and all subjects who, by virtue of participating in the conduct of the call, including as members of the Evaluation Committee, may have access to such confidential data and information.

The applicants agree that data and information regarding the selected projects' implementation (e.g. success stories) not labelled as confidential may be disclosed in connection with the activities of EIT Food.

5. Avoidance of conflict of interest

EIT Food is committed to ensure the avoidance of conflict of interest (regarding all actors) and comply with the principles of transparency, non-discrimination and sound financial management.

Measures to avoid potential Conflict of Interest or unequal treatment of applicants are ensured including through appropriate conflict of interest declaration and assessment process, established written communication channels and independent and fair complaints/redress procedures.

In case an applicant becomes aware of a potential conflict of interest affecting the conduct of the call process, it shall notify the EIT Food of the conflict of interest without any delay.

6. Ethics and values

The proposal must comply with:

- ethical principles (including the highest standards of research integrity) and
- applicable EU, international and national law, including the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and its Supplementary Protocols.

No financial support/EIT funding can be granted, within or outside the EU, for activities that are prohibited in all Member States. No financial support/EIT funding can be granted in a Member State for an activity which is forbidden in that Member State.

Please refer to the financial support agreement for further requirements.

7. Intellectual property rights

Applicants retain full and exclusive ownership of their prior information and intellectual property rights. By submitting their application, applicants affirm that they hold ownership or have legally secured the right to use all elements of the innovative product or service included in their application.

Applicants agree to indemnify and hold harmless EIT Food and/or any assignee or affiliate from any third-party allegations or claims of intellectual property rights infringement by the product or service of applicants. Applicants shall have the right to further develop, use and license their intellectual property rights for creating, making, marketing, and distributing products, services, and technology. Applicants agree to respect the IPR (Intellectual Property Rights) Rules (Article 16) of the General Model Grant Agreement and Article 10 of the Financial Support Agreement (Common Subgrant Agreement Model).

8. Withdrawal of the funding – Recovery of undue amounts

EIT Food may withdraw the funding after its award and recover all payments made in line with the provisions of the Financial Support Agreement, including in the following cases:

- in case the applicant committed substantial errors, irregularities or fraud;
- in case the applicant committed serious breach of obligations under the Financial Support Agreement or during its award (including non-compliance with the call conditions, submission of false information, failure to provide required information, etc.)
- it is established that the awarded applicants were not eligible or should have been excluded.

9. Checks, reviews, audits and investigations

EIT Food retains the right to initiate checks, reviews and audit on an applicant that has been awarded funding, in order to verify compliance with the requirements of the call conditions and of the legal and contractual framework referred to above.

EIT Food may request any information and data from applicants that have been awarded funding for 5 years after completion for these purposes, as well as in relation to monitoring by the EIT.

In accordance with the Grant Agreement between the EIT and the KIC as well as the Financial Support Agreement, the EIT and/or the Commission, the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF), the European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO) and the Court of Auditors may carry out checks, reviews, audits and investigations in relation to the call and the implementation of the projects.

10. Applicable law

The present call is governed by the applicable European Union legal framework(i.e. in particular the EIT Regulation[9], the EU Financial Regulation[10], the Horizon Europe Regulation[11]), supplemented if necessary by the national law of Belgium.

The applicants agree to observe the obligations outlined in the Partnership Agreement and the Grant Agreement signed between the EIT and EIT Food. Applicants agree to comply with the terms of the Model Financial Support Agreement between successful applicants and EIT Food, available here.

11. Settlement of disputes

All disputes arising out of or in connection with this Agreement, which cannot be solved amicably, shall be finally settled before the courts of Brussels.

[9] Regulation (EU) 2021/819

[10] Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509

[11] Regulation (EU) 2021/695

5. Annex 5: Geographical Clusters

Geographical Cluster	EU Member States
1. Northern & Baltic Europe	Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Sweden
2. Western & Central Europe	Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, Netherlands
3. Central-Eastern & South-Eastern Europe	Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia
4. Southern & Mediterranean Europe	Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Spain

History of Changes

Version	Publication Date	Changes
Version 1.0	23/11/2026	