Biotech Alliance Proof of Concept (PoC) & Technology Validation Call

Frequently Asked Questions

Applicants

1. Who can apply to the Biotech PoC Call?
Eligible small and micro enterprises incorporated for at least 12 months developing biotech innovations within the scope of the call, Route 1: TRL 4–6; Route 2: 7-9, can apply. Applicants do not need to be EIT Food or Biotech Alliance members, but they must apply with a committed Biotech Alliance corporate partner that meets the call requirements and supports the proposed PoC through a signed Letter of Intent (LoI). *Please see section 5 of the Call guidelines for more information.*

2. How can a start-up find and secure a corporate partner?
Start-ups are responsible for identifying a suitable corporate partner, confirming its commitment, and submitting the required LoI by the application deadline. EIT Food provides a matchmaking platform through FoodHIVE to help start-ups connect with potential corporate partners within the ecosystem (to access, please register here).

3. What happens if a start-up does not have a corporate partner?
The start-up may use its own network and EIT Food's FoodHIVE matchmaking platform (to access, please register here) to identify and connect with potential corporate partners within the ecosystem. However, the start-up remains responsible for securing a confirmed corporate commitment and submitting the signed LoI by the application deadline.

4. Can pilot facilities be involved in a PoC?
Yes. Pilot facilities may participate by providing services such as infrastructure, equipment or technical expertise. They cannot be the lead applicant, but they may provide in-kind contributions or be contracted to deliver eligible services, subject to the call rules. *Please see section 5 of the Call guidelines for more information.*

5. How can a start-up access an Alliance pilot facility?
Start-ups should identify a suitable facility and contact it directly to discuss technical requirements, availability, access conditions and eligible costs. A list of available pilot facilities can be found in Biotech Alliance FoodHIVE (resources).

6. Can pilot facilities receive funding or contribute in-kind?
Pilot facilities may participate in the project by providing services subject to the funding and eligibility rules of the call. Pilot facilities may provide in-kind support, entry to voucher schemes or be paid for eligible services where justified. *Please see section 5.2 of the Call guidelines for more information.*

7. Is there a minimum or target number of marketed innovations expected from the call?
The call contributes to EIT Food's wider marketed innovation KPI. Applicants should demonstrate a credible pathway towards commercialisation of at least one innovation; full market launch is not necessarily expected within the 12-month PoC. *Please see section 4.3 of the Call guidelines for more information.*

8. What is the difference between the Letter of Intent (LoI) and the Statement of Work (SoW)?
The LoI is submitted with the application and confirms the corporate partner's commitment to support the proposed PoC. If the application is approved, a SoW will then be prepared to define the agreed activities, responsibilities, deliverables and expected outputs of the collaboration between EIT Food and the corporate partner. The applying start-up is not a party to the SoW. *Please see section 2 of the Call guidelines for more information about the LoI.*

Corporate partners

9. Does the corporate partner have to be a Biotech Alliance member?
Yes. The corporate partner must be a Biotech Alliance member. If a corporate partner is not yet an Alliance member, they should contact **biotechalliance@eitfood.eu** to discuss how to join. *Please see section 5 of the Call guidelines for more information about eligibility.*

10. How can a corporate partner become a Biotech Alliance partner?
Corporate organisations interested in joining the Biotech Alliance should contact **biotechalliance@eitfood.eu** to discuss eligibility, expected involvement, contribution requirements and next steps. *Please see section 5 of the Call guidelines for more information about eligibility.*

11. What is the corporate contribution?
The corporate partner contributes to the programme through a separate agreement with EIT Food. The current framework foresees a contribution to the PoC equivalent to 60% of the PoC project budget; for a €60,000 project, this would correspond to €36,000 project related costs.

12. Can a corporate partner be in more than 1 proof-of-concept project?
Yes. The corporate partner can nominate multiple startups to apply for the Biotech PoC call and therefore be in more than 1 PoC project. The corporate contribution is the same per project.

13. What agreement should the start-up and corporate partner put in place for their collaboration?
The start-up and corporate partner are responsible for agreeing and putting in place any contractual arrangements needed for their collaboration. EIT Food is not a party to these arrangements and cannot negotiate, review or approve them on the parties' behalf. The

parties should determine the appropriate agreement for their project and seek independent legal advice where needed. Publicly available resources and templates may be used as a starting point. See the EIT Food IP Management Toolbox: https://www.eitfood.eu/ip-management-toolbox

Funding and payments

14. When and how are payments made?
Route 1: The current payment structure consists of two instalments: 50% pre-financing at the start of the project and 50% following acceptance of the final deliverable at month 12. *Please see section 4 of the Call guidelines for more information.*

Route 2: 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, please check the EIT Food Payments Schedule and Section 4 of the Call Guidelines.

Application, evaluation and support

15. Who should I contact with questions about the call?
Please contact **biotechalliance@eitfood.eu** for any further questions about the call requirements.

16. What needs to be submitted with the application?
Applicants should submit the completed application form and all mandatory supporting documents requested in the call guidelines, including evidence of the corporate partner's commitment through the Letter of Intent, proof of corporate turnover, a pitch deck, a budget plan, an impact plan, workplan.

17. What should the Letter of Intent contain?
The LoI should confirm the corporate partner's commitment to support the proposed PoC, describe the nature of the collaboration, and be signed by an authorised representative of the corporate partner. A template for LOI is available here for Route 1 and here for Route 2.

18. Can the corporate partner be secured after the application deadline?
No. The corporate partner's commitment must be secured by the application deadline, and the required LoI must be submitted with the application.

19. What happens after I submit my application?
After submission, EIT Food will first check applications for eligibility and completeness. Eligible proposals will then move to the evaluation stage and be assessed against the published criteria. Applicants may be contacted if EIT Food identifies obvious application or technical errors during the eligibility check. Following evaluation, applicants will be informed

of the outcome and, where relevant, the next steps for contracting, project set-up or interview.

Route 1: The evaluation will be conducted by 2 external evaluators and 1 internal evaluator, based on the criteria specified in section 5.3 of the call guidelines (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.

Route 2: 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. Proposals with a score above 3.5 will be invited to an interview, which will be conducted by the external evaluators and the internal evaluator. The ranking and scores will be revised after the interviews to reflect the outcome of the discussion

Please see section 6 of the call guidelines for more information on the expected timeline and evaluation criteria on section 5.3

20. Can an application be corrected after submission?
Applicants should submit complete and accurate applications by the deadline. However, during the eligibility check, if EIT Food identifies a system malfunction that occurred on its application portal before the submission deadline and led to missing supporting documents, the applicant may be given the opportunity to submit those documents. Replacement of documents already submitted, as required by the call guidelines, will not be accepted after the deadline.

21. Can applicants submit more than one proposal?
Yes. Applicants may submit more than one proposal, provided each proposal is distinct and involves a different corporate project partner.

22. How are applications evaluated?
Applications will be assessed by EIT Food and external evaluators through the established evaluation process, against the published criteria. The call is managed by EIT Food. More information about the evaluation criteria can be found in section 5.3.

23. Will there be an interview or pitch panel as part of the evaluation?
Route 1: No interview or pitch panel is currently planned. Applications will be assessed against the published evaluation criteria by two external evaluators and 1 internal evaluator.

Route 2: Proposals will be assessed by three external evaluators and one internal evaluator through a remote evaluation phase, followed by an interview for proposals scoring above 3.5. The ranking and scores may be revised after the interview.

Please see section 5.3.1 of the Call guidelines for the award criteria, subcriteria and maximum scores.

24. What happens if several applications exceed the quality threshold but funding is insufficient?
Applications that pass the quality threshold will be considered within the available budget. *Please see section 5.3.1 of the Call guidelines for the award criteria, subcriteria and maximum scores.*

Implementation and reporting

25. When can projects start and when must they finish?
Projects should start and finish within the implementation period defined in the call guidelines. Projects may start in January 2027 or by April 2027 the latest and must be completed within a maximum funding period of 12 months. Please see section 3.2 of the Call guidelines for the award criteria, subcriteria and maximum scores.

26. What happens if a project is delayed?
Applicants should notify EIT Food as soon as possible if delays arise. Any changes to timing, deliverables or implementation must follow the applicable project management and reporting rules.

27. What evidence is required in the Progress Report and Final Report?
Evidence should demonstrate progress against the approved workplan, use of funding, completion of deliverables, TRL progression and contribution to the expected outcomes. *Please see more information in Annex 7 in the Call guidelines.*

28. How will TRL progression be assessed?
TRL progression will be assessed based on the technical evidence provided during implementation and reporting, including the activities completed, validation results and deliverables achieved. *Please see section 4 and Annex 7 for information about deliverables and project monitoring as well section 6 for evaluation criteria.*

29. What does "marketed innovation" mean for the KPI?
A marketed innovation refers to an innovation that progresses towards market availability in line with EIT Food KPI definitions. Applicants should demonstrate a credible route to commercialisation, even if full market launch is not expected within the 12-month PoC. *Please see section 3.4 of the Call guidelines.*

30. How does the 3-year post-project KPI period work?
Applicants may be asked to provide follow-up information after the project ends to support KPI monitoring and evidence of longer-term innovation outcomes. *See section 3.4 of the call guidelines for more information.*