# Biotech Alliance

# Proof of Concept & Technology Validation Call – Route 1

# Guidelines

## EIT Food/ Proof of Concept & Technology Validation /2026

EIT Food

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www.eitfood.eu/

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# Contents


1. Introduction ..... 3
1. About EIT Food - Vision and focus ..... 3
2. Overview of key information on the call ..... 4
3. Description of the subject matter of the call ..... 5
1. Purpose and scope of activities ..... 5
2. Main requirements for applicants ..... 6
3. Impact ..... 7
4. Main requirements for project implementation ..... 8
4.1. Project duration and implementation ..... 8
4.2. Deliverables ..... 8
4.3. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) ..... 9
4.4. Monitoring and reporting ..... 9
4. Financial aspects of the call ..... 9
1. KIC funding, co-funding rate and cost eligibility ..... 9
2. Payment arrangements ..... 10
3. Financial sustainability requirements ..... 11
5. Call criteria ..... 11
1. Admissibility ..... 11
2. Entities eligible to participate and eligibility for funding ..... 12
3. Award criteria, subcriteria and maximum scores ..... 15
6. Evaluation procedure ..... 16
1. Admissibility and eligibility, exclusion and selection stages ..... 16
2. Evaluation of proposals ..... 16
3. Communication of evaluation results to applicants ..... 17
3.1. Communication of evaluation results ..... 17
3.2. Requirements for selected proposals ..... 17
3.3. Standstill period ..... 18
3.4. Appeal process ..... 18
4. Support ..... 18
7. EIT Food Legal Framework & Legal Documents to be signed ..... 19
1. Contracting ..... 19
Annexes ..... 19
1. Annex 1 - Information on the EIT ..... 19

1. European Institute of Innovation and Technology ..... 19
2. Contractual framework between the EIT and the KICs ..... 20
2. Annex 2 - EU restrictions on participation ..... 20
1. EU restrictive measures ..... 20
2. Legal entities established in Russia, Belarus, or in non-government controlled territories of Ukraine ..... 20
3. Restrictions for the protection of European communication networks ..... 21
3. Annex 3 - Exclusion criteria ..... 21
4. Annex 4 – Other terms and conditions ..... 22
1. Acceptance of the call conditions ..... 22
2. Cancellation of the call ..... 22
3. Data protection ..... 22
4. Confidentiality ..... 23
5. Avoidance of conflict of interest ..... 23
6. Ethics and values ..... 23
7. Intellectual property rights ..... 24
8. Withdrawal of the funding – Recovery of undue amounts ..... 24
9. Checks, reviews, audits and investigations ..... 24
10. Applicable law ..... 24
11. Settlement of disputes ..... 25
5. Annex 5 – Deliverable Report Template ..... 25
6. Annex 6 – Guidance on Impact Requirements ..... 26
7. Annex 7 – Evidence of implementation ..... 27
History of Changes ..... 29

# 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 dependable 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.

### Agri-Food Biotech as a pathway to impact at scale

Through the EU Agri-Food Biotech Alliance EIT Food is bringing together Europe's agri-food biotechnology ecosystem to turn scientific excellence into industrial competitiveness, economic growth and food system resilience. The Alliance is a coordinated action platform including industry, start-ups, researchers, investors, farmers, policymakers and ecosystem partners. It aligns investments, infrastructure, policy, skills and market development to address systemic barriers that no single organisation can solve alone. This includes co-creating and implementing a shared Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda[1] (SRIA), to help accelerate the deployment of advanced biotechnologies across agriculture, food and feed, strengthening Europe's position in biotech and speeding up the path from laboratory to market impact. The SRIA provides the guiding compass on where to focus innovation within the agri-food and feed sector.

[1] More detailed information can be found in the Strategic Research Innovation Agenda: https://www.eitfood.eu/private/SRIA-EU-Agri-Food-Biotech-Alliance.pdf.

## 2. Overview of key information on the call

| | |
|---|---|
| Call ID | EIT Food/ Proof of Concept & Technology Validation/2026 |
| Call opening and deadline for applications | Call opening: 6/11/2026<br>Deadline for applications 18/01/2027 12:00 CET |
| Evaluation and implementation timeline (indicative) | Evaluation of proposals: from 19/1/2027 to 22/1/2027<br>Communication of results to applicants: 8/02/2027<br>*Following the communication of results, the selection and contracting process is expected to be finalized within three months.*<br>Tentative start of the projects: No later than 30/04/2027<br>Tentative end of the projects: No later than 30/04/2028 |
| Maximum funding allocated to this call | The maximum funding allocated to this route is up to 180,000.00 EUR. The maximum funding available per application is 60,000.00 EUR (lump sum). |
| List of call documents | Application form available on the submission platform: MyEITFood Portal<br>Lumpsum Agreement<br>Budget template<br>Other relevant documents available at call webpage in EIT Food Open Calls, this includes the template for the Letter of intent. |
| Topics to be addressed | Eligible projects may span prototype and sample development, laboratory or performance testing, field trials, technical and commercial feasibility validation, sustainability assessments, or pilot-scale process optimisation and scale-up.<br>Relevant technology domains include biomass, precision and gas fermentation, cell and tissue cultivation (animal, plant, and algal), enzymatic bioconversion, plant molecular farming, and cross-platform enablers such as AI and omics, as detailed in the Strategic Research Innovation Agenda. Applications should target agri-biosolutions (e.g. biostimulants, biofertilisers, biocontrol), feed innovations (e.g. sustainable proteins, methane-reducing additives, functional nutrition), or food ingredients (e.g. alternative proteins, functional lipids, vitamins, enzymes, bioactive compounds). All proposals must demonstrate a clear route to market and commercialisation strategy. |
| Contact point<br>Q&A | biotechalliance@eitfood.eu |
| Further information to interested applicants | Information on the support available to interested applicants can be found by consulting the FAQ section in the call guidelines webpage and in Food HIVE where a matchmaking space has been created that will help finding Corporates Organisations and Pilot Facilities relevant to the project ( **to access, please register** here). |

# 3. Description of the subject matter of the call

## 1. Purpose and scope of activities

A 'Proof of Concept' is a small-scale project that tests whether a technology, product or service works in a real-world setting and can meet the needs of a potential customer. For biotech start-ups, this stage is critical because many promising innovations fail before they reach market due to two distinct 'valleys of death'.

To address these challenges, the EIT Food Biotech Proof of Concept funding call comprises two funding routes, each targeting a different valley of death and stage of innovation maturity.

Route 1 (Validation) addresses the first valley of death which typically occurs at lower technology readiness levels (entry TRL 4-6) when a start-up has promising science but lacks the validation, infrastructure and industry partnerships needed to de-risk the technology for real-world application (current document guidelines).

Route 2 (Demonstrator) addresses the second valley of death which occurs later, when a start-up has a validated, de-risked technology but needs larger-scale demonstration, co-financing and industrial partnerships to move toward commercial deployment and market uptake. Applicants whose innovation fits Route 2 profile should refer to the Call Route 2 Guidelines (higher TRL: entry TRL 7-9). The routes do not overlap: the TRL reached at the call deadline determines the route, and the same technology cannot be submitted under both routes.

Together, the two routes provide a pathway for biotech start-ups to access support at the stage most relevant to their development. Through this call, EIT Food aims to foster collaboration between start-ups and corporate partners to validate technologies, test commercial assumptions and generate evidence for future scale-up and investment. This includes where relevant, facilitating access to pilot facilities, laboratories and other specialised infrastructure held by Alliance members – resources that start-ups often cannot access or afford on their own.

Projects should generate practical evidence, reduce technical and commercial risk, and establish a clear pathway towards further development, pilot expansion and market adoption.

The current call guidelines (Route 1) support TRL 4-6 proof-of-concept and small-scale projects with total project costs of up to €60,000.

## 2. Main requirements for applicants

Submissions must be backed by an Agri-Food Biotech Alliance corporate partner as demonstrated by a Letter of Intent as part of their application. Applicants are responsible for securing their corporate partner prior to submission. We advise checking the members of the Biotech Alliance as a first point of reference[2] and Food HIVE (**to access, please register** here).

Where relevant, projects may involve services from pilot facilities within the Alliance ecosystem to test, validate and demonstrate technologies under real-world or near-industrial conditions. Pilot facilities can provide infrastructure, technical expertise and practical support to strengthen validation and scale-up readiness. Pilot facilities may complement their involvement in the project with any co-funding mechanism available to them (e.g., national infrastructure grants, regional funds, vouchers), provided this does not conflict with the call's funding rules.

Types of project may include (but are not limited to):

- Prototype or sample development
- Laboratory, functionality, or performance testing
- Field trials and validation in relevant environment
- Validation of technical or commercial feasibility
- Efficiency, quality, or sustainability assessments
- Pilot-scale process optimisation and scale-up trials

Relevant technology domains include (but not limited to)[3]:

- Biomass fermentation (liquid and solid)
- Precision fermentation
- Gas Fermentation
- Animal and Plant Cell and Tissue Cultivation
- Enzymatic Bioconversion
- Plant Molecular farming
- Cell and Tissue Cultivation
- Algal & Aquatic Biotech
- Cross-Platform Tech enablers (incl. AI & Omics)

Relevant market applications include:

1) **Agri-Biosolutions**: biostimulants, biofertilisers, biocontrol agents, improving soil health and crop resilience while reducing chemical inputs;

2) **Feed applications**: sustainable protein sources, methane-reducing additives, and functional ingredients improving animal nutrition and environmental performance;

3) **Food ingredients**: alternative protein, functional lipids, vitamins, enzymes, and bioactive compounds for healthier and sustainable products.

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[2] Members of the Biotech Alliance can be found here: EU Agri-Food Biotech Alliance - EIT Food and Biotech FOODHIVE (**to access, please register** here).

[3] More detailed information can be found in the Strategic Research Innovation Agenda: https://www.eitfood.eu/private/SRIA-EU-Agri-Food-Biotech-Alliance.pdf. Applicants are encouraged to consult the SRIA to better understand the focus areas relevant to this call.

All projects will need to demonstrate a route to market and commercialisation approach.

Projects may start in February or by April 2027 the latest and must be completed within a maximum funding period of 12 months, for example:

- Projects starting on 1 February 2027 must end by 31 January 2028;
- Projects starting on 30 April 2027 must end by 30 April 2028.

All project activities must be completed within the 12-month funding period.

## 3. Impact

You will often see us talking about the impact of our work at EIT Food. By this, we mean the identifiable benefits and positive change that people, businesses, organisations or society in general will experience through the work we fund.

As such, in addition to demonstrating a clear route to market from your Proof of Concept, projects should contribute to one or more of the following impact areas:

- Health & Nutrition - validating biotech solutions that improve nutritional outcomes, food quality or consumer health
- Circular bioeconomy - converting food system side or waste streams or underutilised biomass into valuable ingredients, materials or products
- Reduced environmental footprint & improved nature outcomes – validating biotech solutions that improve resource efficiency and reduce CO2 emissions e.g. water, fertiliser, energy, packaging

As part of the application, applicants will be asked to select one or more short-term impact indicators that show how the innovation supports EIT Food's impact goals. Applicants will also be asked to outline a clear impact pathway - explaining how the innovation is expected to lead to the selected outcome(s). This helps ensure alignment with the Alliance's mission, shows how market adoption could create real-world impact, and supports future impact analysis.

An impact planning tool template is provided in Annex 6 which must be submitted as part of the application.

Relevant impact indicators from EIT Food's impact framework are listed below:

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. Improved outcomes | |
| | Number of healthier food solutions launched or deployed (reformulation, personalised nutrition, new products) |
| | Number / % of supported solutions aligned with recognised nutrition standards |
| 2. Reduced environmental footprint and improved nature outcomes | |
| | Number of resource efficiency innovations reducing inputs (e.g. energy, water, fertiliser, packaging) |
| | Number of lower-impact protein solutions launched or scaled |
| | Number of waste/side-stream and food loss innovations |
| | Number of solutions for improving biodiversity (not soil related) |
| | Number of solutions for improving soil health |
| | Number of solutions to reduce CO2 emissions |
| 3. Improved circularity and resource valorisation in food systems | |

| | |
|---|---|
| | Number of supply-chain solutions deployed improving security and integrity |
| | Number of production practices that improve resilience, maintain yield or reduce food loss |
| | Number of circular food products or services launched |
| **4. Improved trust, fairness and transparency in the food system** | |
| | Number of transparency solutions (product data) |
| | Number of improved food safety solutions |

# 4. Main requirements for project implementation

## 4.1. Project duration and implementation

Projects may start in February or by April 2027 the latest and must be completed within a maximum funding period of 12 months. All project activities must be completed within the 12-month funding period.

It is required for projects to comply with gender equality, diversity and inclusion principles in line with Annex 5 of the Horizon Europe Model Grant Agreement, Specific Rules, Values) and the EIT Gender Equality Policy and Action Plan 2025-2027.

## 4.2. Deliverables

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

| Deliverable | Description |
|---|---|
| Deliverable 1 | Proof of Concept Progress Report (due no later than month 6) |
| Deliverable 2 | Proof of Concept Final Report (due month 12) |

Grant recipients must submit these deliverables during the implementation period. Both deliverable reports must include the six core Outcome Areas detailed in Annex 5 (Technical validation; Scale-up / Techno-economic feasibility; Regulatory & Safety Readiness; Impact Evidence; Market & Adoption Readiness and Communication Evidence). These six Outcome Areas are the evidence and progress framework for the PoC, whereas EITHE02.4 is the overarching EIT KPI.

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.

### 4.3. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

All EIT Food funded projects should achieve relevant Core Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). For the Biotech Alliance Proof of Concept & Technology Validation Call – Route 1, the main KPIs is:

| KPI Code | KPI description | Minimum target expected |
|---|---|---|
| EITHE02.4 | Number of innovations introduced on the market during the KAVA duration or within 3 years after completion with a sales revenue of at least 10 000 EUR documented | 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).

### 4.4. 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 actual costs incurred with the subgrant, as well as regular reporting of KPIs and deliverables, together with the supporting documentation. Grant recipients must provide the information and supporting evidence required for each reporting point, including KPI data, deliverable updates, and any requested documentation (See section 4 and Annex 2). 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.

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 (see Annex 7 for more examples).

# 4. Financial aspects of the call

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

The total budget for this call is 180,000.00 EUR. Recipients will receive a subgrant by EIT Food to fund their cost.

The maximum funding available for that period per application is 60,000.00 EUR (lump sum).

Projects may start in February or by April 2027 the latest and must be completed within a maximum funding period of 12 months.

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.

The Subgrant is based on pre-fixed lump sum 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.

Participants are not permitted to give a subgrant to another third party. Participants are not permitted to give a subgrant to another third party. Where the start-up purchases services from a pilot facility, it must include the estimated cost in its project budget and support the estimate with a quotation or other reasonable cost basis. During implementation, the start-up must retain records supporting the actual eligible cost and evidence that the service was delivered. Examples include a contract or purchase order, invoice and relevant accounting records, facility service report, test protocol and results, or dated run logs identifying the facility and activity. The records must be provided upon request. When subcontracting, participants must comply with the Horizon Europe procurement rules, particularly the principles of fair competition, equal treatment and avoidance of conflicts of interest.

Other EU funding is not an eligible source of co-funding under this scheme.

## 2. Payment arrangements

The total lump sum contribution will be disbursed 50% upfront followed by instalments (defined as per the calendar) and are conditional upon the delivery of the project deliverables mentioned above. Each deliverable is associated with proportional cost allocation and deduction rate. In cases where deliverables are not completed or only partially fulfilled, a deduction will be applied up to the amount associated with the incomplete deliverable.

Deliverable 1: Proof of Concept Progress Report (due no later than month 6)

‣ Allocated Value: € (0% of the lump sum)

Deliverable 2: Proof of Concept Final Report (due month 12)

‣ Allocated Value: € (100% of the lump sum)

The lump sum is intended to support a broad set of activities aligned with Horizon Europe and EIT Food priorities. It covers the following cost categories:

- **Personnel (approx. €15,000):** partial salaries of core team members (e.g. founders, technical or commercial leads) working on the project.
- **Subcontracting (approx.€7,200):** tasks carried out by third parties, such as external testing under the Horizon Europe procurement rules.
- **Travel (approx.€1,800):** in-person meetings with partners, investors and pilot collaborators within Europe.
- **Other goods and services (approx.€25,440):** materials and consumables, external experts (e.g. legal, regulatory or IP), software tools, pilot-facility services or other services needed for the project.
- **Indirect costs (approx.€10,560):** a flat rate of 25% of personnel, travel and other goods and services.

To prove that the activity has been successfully implemented, the following compulsory deliverables and KPIs must be submitted and approved.

| | Value assigned to deliverables as percentage of total EIT Food contribution |
|---|---|
| Deliverable 1 | 0 of the subgrant |
| Deliverable 2 | 100% of the subgrant |

The payment linked to Deliverable 2 is conditional upon the submission of all required elements listed below. If one or more elements are missing, a proportional deduction will be applied based on the number of missing elements, with each element carrying equal weight:

- Technical validation
- Scale-up / Techno-economic feasibility
- Regulatory & Safety Readiness
- Impact Evidence
- Market & Adoption Readiness
- Communication Evidence

If the deliverable is not submitted at all, no payment will be made for this deliverable.

For more information, please see Annex 5 and the EIT Food Project Financing Policy.

**Please note:** the amount and timing of funding is dependent on the dispersal of funds to EIT Food from the EIT.

### 3. Financial sustainability requirements

The program is fully funded by an EIT Food grant. To ensure financial sustainability of the programme, the corporate counterpart of a Proof-of-Concept project must enter into a separate agreement with EIT Food, committing to a fee that covers part of the EIT Food Proof-of-Concept programme costs. This fee includes 60% of the project budget submitted by the startup they are supporting (submissions must be backed by an Agri-Food Biotech Alliance corporate partner as demonstrated by a Letter of Intent as part of their application).

## 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.

Applicants are required to provide the detailed Excel budget, following the template provided, as a mandatory document.

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, regardless of its place of establishment, including legal entities from non-associated third countries 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 any natural or 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.

Route 1 is a **mono-beneficiary call for start-ups only**. Each proposal is submitted by one single entity only (a small or micro enterprise, see the Organisation Eligibility criteria below), which is the only beneficiary and the only entity that can receive the subgrant. Proposals with more than one beneficiary are ineligible. A mono-beneficiary approach has been selected to keep the application and management process lean and proportionate to the scale and duration of the projects supported under this call. Since activities are limited to focused, short-term proof-of-concept and pilot-scale efforts, requiring a single legal entity to apply and hold full accountability for delivery avoids the administrative burden of consortium agreements, coordination overhead, and shared reporting that a multi-beneficiary structure would impose. This streamlines decision-making, accelerates time to project start, and places clear ownership of both the technical execution and the commercialisation pathway with one accountable applicant.

The other parties involved cannot become beneficiaries under this call:

- **Corporate project partner:** not a beneficiary and receives no funding. It signs the Letter of Intent and a separate agreement with EIT Food confirming its role and acceptance of the call terms (see financial sustainability requirements).
- **Pilot facility:** not a beneficiary and cannot be the lead applicant. It provides services to the start-up, which pays for them from its project budget (see KIC funding, co-funding rate and cost eligibility).

Submissions are only eligible if they involve a corporate project partner that (i) is a member of the EU Agri-Food Biotech Alliance at the call deadline and (ii) has a minimum annual turnover of EUR 1,000,000,000 (one billion euros), as shown in its latest approved annual financial statements, or meets the alternative conditions set out below. The turnover of the legal entity signing the Letter of Intent is considered; where that entity belongs to a group, the turnover shown in the group's latest approved consolidated financial statements may be used. Proof of turnover must be submitted with the application (see Application Eligibility below).

Corporate partners with an annual turnover below EUR 1,000,000,000 are eligible if the application includes documentary evidence of at least one of the following:

- (a) an open innovation programme, or a dedicated innovation, venture or partnership function (e.g. programme description, organisational chart or official company publication); or

- (b) at least one collaboration, pilot, proof-of-concept or investment with a start-up or scale-up completed in the three years before the call deadline (e.g. signed agreement, purchase order or public announcement naming both parties).

All submitted applications will undergo an eligibility check to advance to the evaluation stage, according to the evaluation criteria below. An application is eligible only if every criterion is met.

| Organisation Eligibility | Each implementing participant must: |
|---|---|
| | • Be a legally incorporated entity in one of the EU or Horizon Europe eligible countries for a minimum of 12 months of business activity.<br>• Have a technology, product, service, or solution aligned to one of the three EIT Food Missions that addresses a technology domain or market application(s) as listed in section 3.2.<br>• Be either i) a SMALL sized company as defined in the EU recommendation 2003/361 (fewer than 50 employees and an annual turnover or annual balance sheet total not exceeding EUR 10 million), or ii) a MICRO sized company as defined in the EU recommendation 2003/361 (fewer than 10 employees and an annual turnover or annual balance sheet total not exceeding EUR 2 million).<br>• Has a committed corporate project partner and member of the EU Agri-Food Biotech Alliance to deliver the proof-of-concept or small-scale pilot project for. Please note that to be able to submit the application, the corporate partner must accept the terms and conditions of the present call.<br>• Provide a PIC Number: https://www.eitfood.eu/files/PIC-Guidance.pdf |
| Application Eligibility | To be eligible, applications must: |
| | • Be complete, with all mandatory supporting documents, including:<br>o A signed a Letter of Intent between corporate project partner and EIT Food ivzw detailing the PoC co-financing instrument terms and conditions (see templates on the call website)<br>o Proof of the corporate project partner's annual turnover, such as the latest approved annual accounts, audited financial statements, annual report, or equivalent official company filing and, where the turnover is below EUR 1,000,000,000, the documentary evidence of open innovation capability listed above.<br>o A company presentation (i.e., pitch deck), outlining the commercial capacity and capabilities of your company as well as the readiness of your proposed product or solution for market entry / expansion.<br>o A budget plan outlining the expected costs for the proposed project scope (the template can be found in the call webpage).<br>o A completed Impact Planning tool (the template can be found in Annex 6 or in the call webpage) plan outlining the selected impact indicator(s) and the expected impact pathway of the proposed innovation (template in Annex 3).<br>• Respond to the KPIs and Deliverables specified in section 4.<br>• Declare in the application form an entry Technology Readiness Level (TRL) of 4, 5 or 6.<br>• Respond to one or more challenges as listed in the submission platform. |

| | |
|---|---|
| | • Be submitted on time via the submission platform.<br>• Be fully written in English. |

In accordance with the Horizon Europe Work Programme 2025[4], in order to be **eligible for funding**, the **applicant must be established in one of the eligible countries**, i.e.:

- the Member States of the European Union, including their outermost regions;
- the Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs) linked to the Member States[5];
- countries associated to Horizon Europe[6];
- certain low- and middle-income countries[7].
- Legal entities, which are established in countries not listed above will be eligible for funding if their participation is considered essential for implementing the action by the EIT.

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

An applicant will be deemed ineligible if they are a beneficiary in an EIT Food funded project in 2027, conducting similar testing or marketing activities for the similar technological solution in a similar geographical market with the same legal entities involved, ensuring that there is no double charging of costs.

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.

[4] https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/wp-call/2025/wp-14-general-annexes_horizon-2025_en.pdf

[5] Entities from Overseas Countries and Territories (OCT) are eligible for funding under the same conditions as entities from the Member States to which the OCT in question is linked. See the Horizon Europe Programme Guide on the portal for a complete list of OCTs.

[6] Please see the Horizon Europe Programme Guide on the Funding and Tenders Portal for up-to-date information on the current list of and the position for Associated Countries: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/programme-guide_horizon_en.pdf

[7] See the Horizon Europe Programme Guide on the Funding and Tenders Portal for a complete list of these countries.

## 3. Award criteria, subcriteria and maximum scores

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

| a) Excellence (30%) | Maximum score |
|---|---|
| • Traction & milestone achievements: evidence of progress to date, e.g. validated technical milestones (TRL 4-6), completed pilots, customers or revenue, IP and investment raised.<br>• Problem-Solution-Fit<br>• Collaboration experience of the corporate project partner and, where involved, the pilot facility: their track record of collaboration with start-ups and in agrifood biotech innovation and contribution to initiatives aligned with the objectives of the EIT Food Agrifood Biotech Alliance.<br>• Gender mainstreaming and integration of gender dimension into innovation and education content | 1-5 |
| **b) Impact (30%)** | **Maximum score** |
| • Contribution to the EIT Food missions and impact areas: relevance of the selected impact indicator(s) and credibility of the impact pathway.<br>• Technology novelty compared with the state of the art and competing solutions.<br>• Ability of the PoC to accelerate the applicant's commercial success: route to market, market potential and likelihood of achieving KPI EITHE02.4. | 1-5 |
| **c) Quality and efficiency of the implementation (20%)** | **Maximum score** |
| • Quality and feasibility of the work plan: work packages, deliverables, milestones, acceptance criteria and risk mitigation, and feasibility of the scale-up or validation activities within 12 months.<br>• Resource utilisation and cost efficiency: the budget allocated to each deliverable is realistic, justified and proportionate (value for money).<br>• Role and contribution of the corporate project partner and, where involved, the pilot facility in the proposed project: concrete tasks, resources, access to infrastructure and commitment in the work plan.<br>• Quality of Deliverables<br>• Value for money is ensured, and budget does not include ineligible costs.<br>• Cost estimations are in line with and justified by the activities proposed, reasonable and non-excessive. | 1-5 |
| **d) Strategic fit (20%)**<br>KIC Portfolio strategic fit and compliance with the financial sustainability principles and knowledge triangle integration | **Maximum score** |
| • Alignment with the Agrifood Biotech Alliance SRIA and EIT Food's strategic priorities, and complementarity with (no duplication of) EIT Food's existing portfolio.<br>• Contribution to the EIT Food Biotech Portfolio and to knowledge triangle integration. | 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. The highest-scoring applications will be selected until funding is exhausted.**

# 6. Evaluation procedure

## 1. Admissibility and eligibility, exclusion and selection stages

This funding opportunity follows the timeline below (tbd):

| | |
|---|---|
| Call Open Date | 6/11/2026 |
| Call Deadline | 18/1/2027 12:00 CET |
| Evaluation | 19/1/2027 to 29/1/2027 |
| Communication to applicants | w/c 1/02/2027 |
| Requests for clarification / Appeals | Within 15 calendar days of receipt of results; EIT Food replies within 3 weeks |
| Standstill period | 30 calendar days from communication of results (indicatively 01/02/2027 – 03/03/2027) |
| Onboarding and legal entity validation | By w/c 03/03/2027 |
| Contracting | After the completion of validation: indicatively March 2027 |
| Indicative start of project implementation | no later than 30/04/2027 |

## 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 2 external evaluators and 1 internal evaluator, based on the criteria specified in section 5.3.1 (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.

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 the outcome of the evaluation including their score.

In case an applicant requests further clarification regarding the evaluation result, it may contact the KIC by email. Such requests will be replied within 15 days (this deadline may be extended by the KIC with due justification).

Successful proposals will be invited to the financial support agreement preparation stage/onboarding, while unsuccessful proposals with a score above 3.5, will be put on the reserve list until this process is completed. The preparation stage/onboarding involves 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.

A reduced lump-sum amount may be communicated as part of the evaluation results.

## 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. EIT Food will respond to any appeal requests within 3 weeks of receipt of the request.

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 Mariana Fazenda at biotechalliance@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:

1. Lump sum agreement

# 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)[8] 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)[9] 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.

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)[10] as well as Article 75 TFEU[11], 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[12].

## 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,

[8] Model Partnership Agreement: Partnership Agreement
[9] Horizon Europe Model Grant Agreement: general-mga_horizon-euratom_en.pdf
[10] 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
[11] 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
[12] 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)

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[13] (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[14]. For further information, please refer to the Horizon Europe, Work Programme 2025, General Annexes, B – Eligibility on page 14.

## 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).

[13] OJ L 229, 31.7.2014, p. 1–11

[14] 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.

- 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[15], the EU Financial Regulation[16], the Horizon Europe Regulation[17]), 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.

[15] Regulation (EU) 2021/819
[16] Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509
[17] Regulation (EU) 2021/695

### 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.

# 5. Annex 5 – Deliverable Report Template

Projects will need to produce a Progress Report under Deliverable 1 and a Final Report under Deliverable 2 (see section 4).

For both reports, the following six Outcome Areas must be included. Please see descriptions and examples of evidence required in the table below.

For further information on Impact Evidence, please refer to Annex 6.

Grant recipients must prepare and retain an activity-level evidence plan for the work carried out under the project. The evidence must show what was done, when and where it was done, by whom, and what resulted. For tests, trials, demonstrations or service activities, suitable evidence may include, where relevant: the protocol or test plan; dated raw or processed test data; facility, laboratory or equipment logs; sample or batch records; signed service or activity records identifying the location and parties involved; and photographs, outputs or other records showing the activity and results. A summary report alone may not be sufficient to demonstrate that the activity was implemented as described. Underlying evidence must be retained by the grant recipient and provided to EIT Food upon request for monitoring, verification, review or audit purposes.

| Outcome Area | Description | Evidence (examples) |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Technical validation | Validated technical performance and TRL progression (no later than 6 & 12 months) | * Performance metrics against predefined target(s)/baseline<br>*Reproducibility demonstrated where relevant<br>*Evidence supporting TRL progression *(see Regulatory & IP Support below)* |
| 2. Scale-up / Techno-economic feasibility | Scale-up feasibility and projected techno-economic performance at the next relevant scale (no later than 6 & 12 months) | *scale-up / engineering evidence<br>*key process parameters<br>*projected unit cost and resource requirements at next relevant scale<br>*comparison with an appropriate alternative |
| 3. Regulatory & Safety Readiness | Regulatory and safety requirements addressed, with critical evidence gaps and next steps identified (no later than 6 & 12 months) | *Regulatory pathway assessment<br>* Applicable evidence requirements identified<br>* Critical gaps identified and addressed, including through early engagement with national/EU food safety agency support lines *(see Regulatory & IP Support below)* |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 4. Impact Evidence | Quantified contribution to the primary intended impact area(s) (Health & Nutrition / Circular Bioeconomy / Reduced Environmental Footprint & Nature Outcomes) (no later than 6 & 12 months) | *theory of change<br>*data collection methodology<br>*updated impact planning tool<br>*baseline vs innovation using mass/energy balance or other appropriate evidence<br>*quantified change and assumptions. |
| 5. Market & Adoption Readiness | Evidence of user/customer need and pathway to adoption (no later than 6 & 12 months; follow-up at 24/36 months) | *customer/user validation and application testing<br>*pilot interest<br>*LOI/agreement or equivalent evidence<br>*adoption barriers and next step commitment *(see Regulatory & IP Support below)* |
| 6. Communication Evidence | Communication & Dissemination (no later than 6 & 12 months) | *Short communication plan naming target audience(s), channel(s) and at least one planned activity (included in Deliverable 1)<br>*Communication and Dissemination Report (that includes evidence on communication activities performed and evidence of one dissemination action and one stakeholder engagement completed during the PoC) (INCLUDED IN Deliverable 2) |

**Regulatory & IP Support**

Projects are encouraged to make early use of the support available to shape both their regulatory and IP strategy during the PoC phase. On the regulatory side, this includes contacting the pre-submission or early-advice lines of relevant food safety agencies (e.g. EFSA's General Pre-Submission Advice service, or equivalent national bodies) to begin scoping the regulatory pathway and dossier requirements before formal submission, informing evidence generation under Outcome Areas 1, 3 and 5. On the IP side, projects should consider engaging early with Technology Transfer Offices (TTOs), national IP offices, the EPO (patents) and EUIPO (trademarks/designs) to clarify freedom-to-operate, protect background and foreground IP, define licensing terms, and align IP strategy with the project's commercialisation and adoption pathway.

# 6. Annex 6 – Guidance on Impact Requirements

The Impact Planning Tool has been designed to help applicants for the EIT Food Biotech Proof of Concept call describe how their proposal will lead to impact in line with the scope and aims of EIT Food and the Biotech Alliance.

Download a copy of the template here (EIT Food Impact Planning Tool_Biotech Call) so that you can work offline to complete your Impact Planning and submit it as a PDF as part of your application on the MyEITFood portal.

Applicants should identify at least one primary short term impact indicator and intended impact of the proposed innovation, selected from the relevant impact areas highlighted within the call and tool, i.e.

- Improved health & nutrition outcomes
- Reduced environmental footprint and improved nature outcomes
- Improved circularity and resource valorisation in food systems
- Improved trust, fairness and transparency in the food system).

## Impact Evidence section of Deliverable Reports

The mandatory Deliverable Reports include a section on Impact Evidence.

In this section projects will be expected to explain the cause-and-effect pathway through which the innovation is expected to contribute to the identified impact and define one or more measurable indicators against which progress can be assessed during the 12-month project. The project should establish a baseline or relevant comparator and provide quantified evidence of the contribution achieved or credibly demonstrated during the project.

As such this section should include:

- Theory of Change
- Data Collection Methodology
- Updated Impact Planning Tool

Additional impact areas may be identified where they are directly relevant and supported by evidence, but projects are not expected to quantify impacts that are not relevant to their innovation.

# 7. Annex 7 – Evidence of implementation

The table below sets out the minimum evidence expected for each type of activity:

| Type of activity | How completion is demonstrated | Acceptable evidence (examples) |
|---|---|---|
| Tests, trials and demonstrations | The test was carried out according to the protocol, at the stated site and on the stated dates, and results are reported against the targets in the project plan. | Protocol or test plan<br>Dated raw and processed data<br>Equipment, laboratory, facility or batch logs<br>Signed minutes or service records stating the nature of the test, location, dates and parties involved<br>Photos or video of the set-up and runs |
| Services from a pilot facility or other provider | The service was delivered as contracted. | Signed contract or purchase order<br>Facility service report and dated run logs identifying the facility and activity<br>Test results delivered by the provider |
| Regulatory work | The assessment was completed and the regulatory steps described in the plan were taken. | Regulatory assessment report<br>Correspondence or meeting minutes with authorities (e.g. pre-submission advice)<br>Submitted dossiers, certificates or registrations |
| Impact measurement | A baseline was set and the change was measured with the stated method. | Data collection methodology<br>Datasets and calculation sheets<br>Updated Impact Planning Tool |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Customer validation and commercial steps | Validation activities took place with the named customers or users and the results are documented. | Pilot or test reports acknowledged by the customer<br>Signed letters of intent, agreements or purchase orders<br>Minutes of meetings with customers, investors or partners |
| Workshops, events and dissemination | The event took place on the stated topic and dates, with the stated number of participants; outputs were published. | Agenda and activity summary<br>Signed participant lists (or registration records for online events)<br>Photos, recordings or presentations<br>Public dissemination materials and links to outputs (articles, posts, press coverage) |
| Project management and reporting | Reports were submitted on time and the project was steered with the corporate partner. | Reports submitted on the grant management platform<br>Minutes of project meetings with the corporate partner |

# History of Changes

| Version | Publication Date | Changes |
|---|---|---|
| Version 1.0 | 20/10/2026 | Original Version |
| Version 1.1 | 05/11/2026 | Dates deadline |