Seedbed TeamUp Call for Projects Call Guidelines

EIT Food / Seedbed TeamUp Call for Projects / 2026

EIT FOOD

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eitfood.eu

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Call Fact Sheet

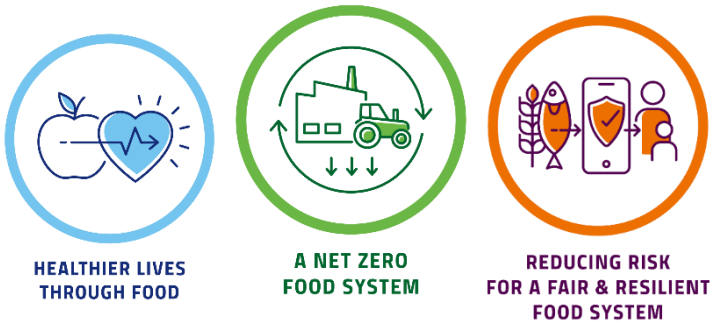
Title of Call	Seedbed TeamUp Call for Projects 2026
Objective and Scope	Selecting projects to participate in the startup venture exploration and development phase of the Seedbed TeamUp programme
Call Deadline	13:00 CET 30th July 2026
Available Funding	180,000 EUR
Project Duration	August 2026 – November 2026
How to apply	MyEITFood Portal
Contact Information	ian.collingwood@eitfood.eu

1. Introduction

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

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

Our Missions



EIT Food´s Missions respond to major societal challenges within the food system. The alignment of our chosen challenges towards United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and EU policy is detailed in our main funding strategy document agreed with EIT (European Institute of Innovation & Technology). For more about our Missions-led approach please visit our website.

2. Selecting Projects for Seedbed TeamUp Exploration Phase

This EIT Food Request for Projects has the objective of selecting projects that will be invited to join Stage 3 and 4 of Seedbed TeamUp.

TeamUp is a Seedbed programme that matches technologists with entrepreneurial business professionals and supports them through a structured, six-month journey to co-create food and agriculture startups. The programme is delivered fully online and combines selection, matchmaking, training, coaching, mentoring, networking and financial support.

2.1. Description of the Activity

The TeamUp programme consists of four stages. This call will select the teams that will continue from Stage 2 (Matchmaking) to Stage 3 (Exploration) and Stage 4 (Graduation).

Stage 1: Expression of Interest

Open Expression of Interests for individual applicants (technologists and business professionals) to express their interest in joining the programme.

Stage 2: Matchmaking

The individuals selected in Stage 1 participate in structured matchmaking activities including pitching, compatibility analysis, psychometric self-reflection, peer feedback and one-to-one interviews. The objective is to form balanced founding teams composed of at least one tech co-founder and one business co-founder.

Founding teams created in this stage can submit their project proposal to this call.

If an individual is not successful in forming a team by the end of the Matchmaking phase they will leave TeamUp at that point.

Stage 3: Exploration (Lump sum of 6,000 euros)

Selected teams undertake a three-month funded exploration phase equivalent to a demanding part-time commitment. Activities include team building, leadership development, business skills training, value proposition and business model validation, and intensive coaching.

Stage 4: Graduation (Four Prizes of up to 40,000 euros)

Teams are evaluated during Pitching Days and the highest-scoring teams are awarded SAFE investment prizes. Winning teams receive additional coaching and are expected to formalise their startup.

Programme timeline:

- Completion of matchmaking and team formation (end of July 2026)
- Submission of exploration stage assignments (Sept 7th, Sept 28th, Oct 27th)
- Participation in Pitching Days (Nov 4th & Nov 5th)
- Final evaluation and graduation outcomes (Nov 16th)

2.2. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

All **EIT Food funded** projects should achieve relevant Core Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). For the Seedbed TeamUp programme, the main KPIs are:

Code	KPI	KPI Definition
[EITHE03.1]	Supported start-ups/scale-ups	Number of start-ups and scale-ups supported by KICs for at least 2 months in year N, provided the KIC's services contribute to the company's growth (including potential growth)

[EITHE04.4]	Startups created	Number of start-ups established in year N as a result / based on the output(s) of KAVA(s), or start-ups created for the purpose of an innovation project to organise and support the development of an asset (but not later than three years after the completion of KAVA) having financial transactions of at least 10 000 EUR for services/products (result of the KIC KAVA) sold to customers.
[EITHE06.1]	Investment attracted by KIC supported start-ups/scaleups	Total EUR amount of private and public capital attracted within year N by supported start-up/scale-ups (per country) that have received KIC business creation services support of total duration of at least two months, within a maximum of three years following the last received KIC KAVA support activity.

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).

2.3. Deliverables and Milestones

Grant recipients must submit project deliverables. For this activity, individuals selected for Stage 3 must deliver one deliverable containing:

- Part 1: Business Model (End of Month 1)
- Part 2: Costumer Interview Transcripts (End of Month 2)
- Part 3: Attendance sheet from Coaching Sessions (End of Month 3)

All parts must be completed for deliverable to be deemed fulfilled.

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. Description of Role & Profile

3.1 Role

Participants begin TeamUp as individual applicants in Stage 1. During Stage 2 they seek a co-founder with whom to work. If they successfully match with another co-founder they create a Project Team which is eligible to submit an application under this Call for Projects.

Projects and their co-founders should:

- Have actively engaged in matchmaking and team formation

- Have agreed the basis for their future collaboration as co-founders
- Demonstrate that they can commit sufficient time to the Exploration phase of the programme
- Participate in training, coaching and evaluation activities

3.2 Profile

Applicants must present an innovative agrifood technology or solution with potential impact aligned to EIT Food Missions. As a team they should demonstrate they have advanced knowledge of some aspects of food and/or agriculture or a relevant discipline that can be applied to agrifood.

They should show that they have the skills and experience in business and entrepreneurship to navigate the journey of building an agrifood startup. Examples would include skills and experience in sales and marketing, market research, business development, digital marketing, business model development, finance and fund raising and business strategy.

All teams must demonstrate strong motivation, collaborative mindset and good proficiency in English. They must have sufficient time available to commit at least 10 hours of work per week to this programme from the end of July until mid-November 2026. During this time participants also need to attend at least one online meeting or workshop per week of approximately 2-3 hours. Usually these are scheduled on weekdays between the hours of 16:00 and 21:00 CET.

4. Funding

The total budget for this call is 180,000 EUR.

Project Teams who are selected for the second stage of the programme will receive a stipend (lump sum) of 3,000 EUR per team member as a subgrant (6,000 EUR per team). A maximum of 15 projects teams will be selected and each team must comprise 2 people.

After the final Pitching Days, the top four projects co-designed by technologists and business professionals will be awarded prizes.

First prize:	40,000 EUR
Second prize:	25,000 EUR
Third prize:	15,000 EUR
Fourth prize:	10,000 EUR

Winners must register a legal entity to receive the prize. The prize will be awarded to the created entity.

The project runs from August 2026 to November 2026.

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. This funding is implemented under GA 101269771. 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.

The total lump sum contribution will be disbursed in instalments. It is conditional upon the delivery of the project deliverables mentioned below. 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:

- Part 1: Business Model (7th Sept 2026)
- Part 2: Customer Interview Transcripts (1st Oct 2026)
- Part 3: Attendance sheet from Coaching Sessions (22nd Oct 2026)

All parts must be completed for deliverables to be deemed fulfilled (22nd Oct 2026).

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

- **Other goods, works and services (up to 2500 euros):**
  - Subsistence for core team members (e.g. founders, technical or commercial leads) engaged in product development, validation & commercialisation, and investor readiness.
  - External experts (e.g. legal, regulatory, or IP), outsourced product development, software tools, fundraising support, and other operational services that drive business growth.
  - Costs and services required to develop and test product – pilot facilities, software and hardware development, prototyping and fabrication
  - Business support: Coaching, mentoring and advisory support.
- **Travel (up to 500 euros):** In-person attendance at critical meetings with co-founders, partners, investors, and pilot collaborators within Europe.

Subgrantees must comply with the Horizon Europe procurement rules, particularly the principles of fair competition, equal treatment and avoidance of conflict of interest.

4.1. Financial Sustainability

The funding given to startups at the end of the TeamUp programme is delivered as a SAFE instrument, providing the opportunity for return on investment if the startup succeeds. Furthermore, all projects created in TeamUp, even those not funded at the end are alumni of an EIT Food entrepreneurship programme and are therefore eligible for Access to Finance scheme.

5. Call Timeline and Application

5.1 Timeline

This funding opportunity follows the timeline below:

Call Open Date	30th June 2026
Call Deadline	13:00 CET 30th July 2026
Evaluation	31th July – 3rd August 2026
Communication to participants selected for Stage 3	4th August 2026
Standstill, Onboarding, Validation and Contracting of participants	7 days
Indicative start of Stage 3	12th August 2026

Prize Contest	4th & 5th November 2026
Standstill, Onboarding, Validation and Contracting of prize awardees	1 month after Prize Contest

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.

5.2 Application Submission

Applications must be submitted via myeitfood.eu no later than the call deadline.

6. Eligibility, Evaluation and Selection Process

6.1 Eligibility

This call is open to all individuals who meet the eligibility criteria. Please read Annex 1, in addition to the following eligibility criteria:

Team Eligibility	Each participant must:
	• Founder Team completed Stage 1 and 2 of TeamUp 2026 • Founder Team composed of two individuals with experience and expertise in technology and entrepreneurial business
Application Eligibility	Each application must:
	• Should be aligned with or relevant to the EIT Food Missions and Themes as described on the website • Be complete, with all mandatory application documents uploaded. Including Budget, following the template provided by EIT Food. • Be submitted on time via our submission template. • Be fully written in English.

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

6.2 Evaluation Process

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.

Both evaluation stages will be conducted by a minimum of 1 external evaluator and 1 internal evaluator, based on the criteria below. Internal evaluators only assess KIC portfolio strategic fit and compliance with the financial sustainability principles (10%).

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, and are obliged to provide evidenced justification on the assessment of budgets.

6.2.1. Evaluation Criteria - Stage 3: Exploration

The teams formed during matchmaking will submit a project proposal for evaluation according to the criteria below.

The following criteria and weighting will be used in the assessment to select the individuals continuing to the Exploration Phase.

Criteria	Sub criteria	Score
Excellence (25%)	The co-founders have complementary skills and experience and have the potential to form a strong team.	1-5
Impact (40%)	The product/solution the team presents is innovative, scalable and has the potential to transform Europe's food system and deliver social, environmental and economic impact.	1-5
Quality and efficiency of the implementation (25%)	The team has a clear and realistic plan for how they intend to use the time and resources available to them in the Exploration stage. Value for money on the proposed budget.	1-5
KIC portfolio strategic fit and compliance with the financial sustainability principles (10%)	The proposed solution has the potential to deliver financial return if scaled successfully.	1-5

The quality threshold for selection is a total weighted score of 3.5. The top highest-scoring applications will be selected.

6.2.2. Evaluation Criteria - Graduation & SAFE Prize Award

The following criteria and weighting will be used in the assessment of the project teams to award the SAFE investment prizes:

Criteria	Sub criteria	Score
Excellence (25%)	The proposed solution is distinctive, innovative and can effectively tackle a well-defined/identified problem. The business model articulates a clear route to market, is scalable and realistic.	1-5
Impact (45%)	The innovation has big potential to improve Europe's food system and deliver social, environmental and economic impact.	1-5

	The prize will be catalytic for development of the idea and successful exploitation of the market opportunity.	
Quality and efficiency of the implementation (20%)	The team has the necessary skills, expertise and experiences to exploit the identified market opportunity. The team developed successfully during the programme. They are fully aware of their strengths, weaknesses and roles.	1-5
KIC portfolio strategic fit and compliance with the financial sustainability principles(10%)	The proposed solution has the potential to deliver financial return if scaled successfully.	1-5

The quality threshold for selection is a total weighted score of 3.5. The top highest-scoring applications will be selected.

For all evaluation phases, each sub-criterion will be scored from 1 to 5 using the following scoring system.

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

All applicants will be alerted in writing to the outcome of their proposal, including their score and an evaluation summary report. A reduced lump-sum amount may be communicated as part of the evaluation results.

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

6.3 Appeal on Evaluation Results

Applicants can submit an appeal within 15 calendar days of receiving their result, if:

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

For more details, please refer to EIT Food Redress guidance.

7. Administrative Items

7.1 Onboarding

As part of the onboarding process, selected individuals must:

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

7.2 EIT Food Legal Framework & Legal Documents to be signed

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

To be signed between the participant and EIT Food:

Phase 3 (Exploration): Lump sum agreement (per individual)

Phase 4 (Graduation & SAFE Prize Award): Prize Agreement and SAFE Agreement (per company)

Any other legal agreements to make this grant eligible.

7.3 Payment Schedule

Lump sum

The lump sum contribution will be disbursed in instalments and is conditional upon the delivery of the project deliverables. The first instalment comes as pre-financing and represents 50% of the total budget. Further instalments will be transferred upon completion of each deliverable.
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.

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

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

For more information, please see EIT Food Project Financing Policy.

The grant will be paid to the lead applicant of the team. The team members are solely responsible for agreeing on how the grant is allocated among themselves. EIT Food will not intervene in the event of any disputes.

Prizes

EIT Food will transfer the prize amount in a single instalment after the agreement signature.

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

7.4 Monitoring

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

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

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

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

7.5 Support

If you have any questions about this Request for Projects, please contact ian.collingwood@eitfood.eu

Please visit the Seedbed TeamUp 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.

ANNEX 1 – Eligibility

Please Note:

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

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

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

4. Applicants will be deemed ineligible if:

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

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

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

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

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

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