EIT Food Accelerator Network Call for Startups – Terms & Conditions

Version 2026_07

Amended: 26.06.2026
SUP-BC-18178-26-01

EIT Food – Making Food Innovation Happen

Knowledge & Innovation Centre on Food,
part of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT)
http://www.eitfood.eu

Co-funded by the European Union

Table of Contents

Call Fact Sheet

1. EIT Food

1.1 Introduction

2. EIT Food Accelerator Network

2.1 Scope of the programme

2.2 Key Performance Indicators

3. Funding

3.1 Travel Subgrant

3.2 Tech Validation Subgrant

3.3 Deliverables and Milestones

4. Timeline

4.1 Application submission

5. Eligibility

5.1 General criteria

5.2 Formal criteria

5.3 Exclusion criteria

5.4. Documents and reporting

6. Evaluation and Selection

6.1 Eligibility

6.2 Evaluation Process

6.3 Announcing results of the call

6.4 Redress or appeal on evaluation results

7. Administrative Items

7.1 Onboarding

7.2 EIT Food Legal Framework and Documents to be signed

7.3 Payment Schedule

7.4 Monitoring

8. Access to further funding opportunities

9. Other conditions

9.1 Publicity – Promoting the EIT FAN – Visibility of the EU Funding

9.2 Dissemination and exploitation of results

9.3 Processing of personal data

9.4 Ethics

9.5 Liability for damages

9.6 Administrative sanctions

9.7 Cancellation of the programme

9.8 Terms & Conditions

10. Contact

ANNEX 1 – Eligibility

Call Fact Sheet

Title of Call	EIT Food Accelerator Network Call for Startups
Objective and Scope	The call supports high-potential agrifood and foodtech startups to validate their technologies, accelerate go-to-market readiness, and access European expertise, networks, and funding through the EIT Food Accelerator Network.
Call Deadline	April 14th, 2026, 12:00 CET
Available Funding	816,000 EUR (up to 53,000 EUR per startup)
Project Duration	June 2026 – June 2028
How to apply	Please submit your online application, including necessary attachments via myeitfood.eu.
Contact Information	alexandra.kyvik@eitfood.eu

1. EIT Food

1.1 Introduction

EIT Food IVZW is an international non-profit organization incorporated under the laws of Belgium, having its registered address at Philipssite 5, Ubicenter A bus 34, 3001 Leuven, Belgium, registered at the Crossroads bank for Enterprises with number 0672.423.992, Register of Legal Entities Leuven (hereinafter referred to as 'EIT Food').

EIT Food is a pan-European partnership designed to empower innovators and entrepreneurs to develop world-class solutions to food challenges, accelerate innovation, create jobs and increase Europe's competitiveness. As one of the largest food-related initiatives worldwide, EIT Food wants Europe to lead a global revolution in food innovation and production, improve nutrition and making food systems more resource-efficient, secure, transparent and trusted. EIT Food is one of the Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KIC) of the EIT (European Institute of Innovation and Technology) and funded by the European Commission. It unites more than 60 partners along the Food value chain – academic and research institutions as well as industry– from more than 20 European countries. Its five Innovation Hubs across

Europe (also called Co- location Centres - CLCs) aim at fostering innovation across the regional ecosystems of industry, research institutions and universities.

2. EIT Food Accelerator Network

2.1 Scope of the programme

The EIT Food Accelerator Network (FAN) is a multi-Hub accelerator programme delivered across Europe, to support high-impact agrifood and foodtech startups to further validate their technology and accelerate their go-to-market readiness. Once startups have applied for the EIT FAN and have chosen the theme that best matches their product/solution, they will go through a rigorous selection process where they will be evaluated by a series of experts, including entrepreneurs, investors and experts from the agriculture and food industries.

If successful, startups will be invited to join one of the six accelerator programmes taking place in parallel across Europe:

- Munich, Germany - Theme “Smart and Low-Carbon Supply Chains”
- Helsinki, Finland – Theme: “Circular Solutions for Food Systems”
- Paris, France – Theme: “Biotech Ingredients, Products and Processes”
- Warsaw, Poland – Theme: “Future Resilient Agriculture”
- Catania, Italy – Theme: “Water-Smart Agrifood Systems”
- Wageningen, Netherlands – "Digital & Autonomous Farming Solutions”

Over a 2-3-month acceleration period spread between September-December 2026, selected startups will have access to a great variety of tools, resources, mentors and expertise and will get the opportunity to (re)-shape their product tech development roadmap as well as advance their commercial and investment readiness with the ultimate goal: a successful market adoption.

- At the end of the accelerator programme, there will be a Technology Validation pitch event per Hub where startups from that specific Hub will be invited to pitch their Tech Validation Project in front of a Jury of entrepreneurs, researchers and experts from the agriculture and food industries.

- The top 3 best performing startups of each Tech Validation pitch event (18 startups in total) will receive a subgrant of 50,000 euros, 30,000 euros or 20,000 euros to implement their project with the facilities of their choice (e.g. Universities, Research Centers) in 2027.

The aim of the EIT FAN is to provide support to agrifood startups:

- To accelerate their Technology Validation and access cutting-edge facilities and equipment across Europe;
- To reach the market faster via the EIT Food Innovation Community, e.g. finding potential partners and piloting customers (i.e. pilot projects);
- To facilitate access to future funding opportunities (such as seed investments, financing loans and other financing instruments);
- To gain higher visibility via EIT Food channels, the agrifood space in general and to connect them to the local and European startup ecosystem.

2.2 Key Performance Indicators

All EIT Food funded projects should achieve relevant Core Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). For the EIT Food Accelerator Programme the main KPIs are:

Code	KPI	KPI Definition
EITHE02.1	Marketed Innovations	New or significantly improved product/service introduced to the market after the acceleration (up to 3 years after participation in the programme), proved by a minimum of 10,000 euros sales invoices.
EITHE06.1	Investment attracted	Funding raised after the acceleration (up to 3 years).
EITHE03.1	Supported startups	Number of supported companies in cohort.
EITHE 08.1	Participants	Number of people who participated in the acceleration.

3. Funding

The total budget for this call is €816,000. Recipients will receive one or more subgrants to fund their costs, depending on their participation and performance in the acceleration programme.

The project (including onboarding, acceleration programme and for selected startups the tech validation project) runs from June 2026 up to June 2028 (see detailed timeline in point 4). The maximum funding available per application (including both subgrants, where applicable) is €53,000.

There is a €6 million limit per participant from Member States of the European Union (EU) and from Horizon Europe Associated Countries for the whole 3-year Grant Agreement. Legal entities from non-Horizon Europe Associated Countries can participate in consortia but are limited to €60,000 over 3 years for a Grant Agreement. This funding is implemented under GA 101269771. These limits include all EIT funding awarded to an organisation across all activities and prizes within the 3-year Grant Agreement.

The Subgrant is based on **lump sum**. 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.

For Tech Validation winners, in addition to Horizon Europe rules, the following thresholds apply.

- Depreciation can amount to a maximum of 37.5% of total costs.
- Participants are not permitted to give a subgrant to another third party.

3.1 Travel Subgrant

A **lump sum of €3,000 per startup** to cover travel-related costs linked to participation in the programme.

The total lump sum contribution will be disbursed in instalments. The first instalment will be disbursed after signing the Lump Sum Agreement. The second instalment is conditional upon the delivery of the programme deliverable (further described in **Section 3.3).** Each deliverable is associated with proportional cost allocation and deduction rate.

The Travel subgrant is intended to support costs directly linked to the startup's participation in the programme and is aligned with Horizon Europe and EIT Food priorities. It may cover the following cost categories:

- Travel and subsistence (up to €3000):
  Transportation and accommodation costs (e.g. train, flight, local transport) for in-person attendance at programme activities, Tech Validation pitch events, meetings with partners, investors, or pilot collaborators within Europe.

3.2 Tech Validation Subgrant

Additional funding awarded only to startups selected through the Tech Validation pitch events.

The total lump sum contribution will be disbursed in instalments. The first instalment will be disbursed after signing the Lump sum Agreement and a Simple Agreement For Future Equity ("SAFE"). The second instalment is conditional upon the delivery of the project deliverable (further described in section 3.3). 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.

The Tech Validation subgrant is intended to support a broad set of activities aligned with Horizon Europe and EIT Food priorities. It may cover the following cost categories:

- Travel and Subsistence (indicative 6.4% of subgrant): Travel costs related to technology validation activities (e.g. visits to testing or production facilities).
- Equipment (indicative 37.6% of subgrant): Costs related to the depreciation or rental of materials or machinery required to advance the technical validation of products or solutions.
- Other Goods & Services (indicative 36% of subgrant): External experts (e.g. legal, regulatory, or IP), outsourced product development, software tools, fundraising support, and other operational services that drive business growth.
- Indirect costs (20%).

At the end of the project, Tech validation winners will need to submit a Final Report demonstrating completion of the Tech Validation activities and achievement of milestones.

Templates for the subgrant agreement, the SAFE and the reports are provided by EIT Food.

3.3 Deliverables and Milestones

As shown in the section above, grant recipients must submit programme deliverables.

All grant recipients (Travel subgrant – €3,000 lump sum) must submit by mid-December 2026:

- Subgrant deliverable report, demonstrating that the startup has:
  - Attended at least 80% of the programme.
  - Displayed the complete EIT Food and EU logo on its website.
  - Participated in the Tech Validation pitch event.
  - Completed the EIT FAN programme satisfaction survey.

Only grant recipients receiving a Tech Validation subgrant (€20,000 / €30,000 / €50,000) must additionally submit by end of June 2027:

- Intermediate report, demonstrating progress against the agreed technical and business milestones.

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. Timeline

This funding opportunity follows the timeline below:

Call Open Date	February 18th
Call Deadline	April 14th, 2026, 12:00 CET
First evaluation round (Round 1)	27 Apr – 01 May
Invitation to interviews, panels (Round 2)	11 May – 15 May
Interviews/Panels (Round 2)	18 May – 29 May
Communication to selected participants	15 June – 19 June
Standstill period, Onboarding, Validation and Contracting	June-August 2026
Hubs' acceleration programme start	September 2026
Hubs' acceleration programme end	December 2026
Tech Validation Project implementation	January 2027 – June 2028

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.

4.1 Application submission

Applications must be submitted in English by the contact person via **MyEIT Food Portal** no later than the call deadline. Incomplete applications or applications submitted in another language may be considered inadmissible if essential elements are missing. For more information, please contact the accelerator manager at the end of this document.

5. Eligibility

Participation in the Programme is subject to compliance with all eligibility criteria defined by EIT Food.

5.1 General criteria

- You have no conflict of interests. Ventures owned by EIT Food employees or members of EIT Food governing bodies and engagements in which EIT Food employees or members of EIT Food governing bodies have an interest are also excluded. EIT Food includes all CLCs of EIT Food and all governing bodies.
- You are not involved in the other EIT Food Business Creation programme, Seedbed. Its focus is on a different stage of company with another offer. For a complete overview of current EIT Food programme offering, please visit the homepage.

5.2 Formal criteria

To be considered eligible for the programme, applicants must be agri-food startups:

- That are set to make a big impact on any part of the agriculture or food supply chain in Europe thus committed to building a healthier, more trusted and sustainable food system in alignment with EIT Food's thematic areas;
- That have an innovative solution/product in one of the EIT FAN themes 2026:

  BIOTECH INGREDIENTS, PRODUCTS AND PROCESSES

  - Cell cultivation, precision/biomass/gas fermentation, molecular farming
  - Unsustainable crop replacers (e.g. cocoa, palm, coffee, sugar, etc.)
  - Enablers (bioreactors, AI, omics, etc.)
  - Clean label solutions
  - Targeted nutrition (e.g. GLP-1, longevity, children, sports, etc.)

  CIRCULAR SOLUTIONS FOR FOOD SYSTEMS

- By-Product & Waste Stream Valorisation (including nutrients recovered from wastewaters)
- Upcycled Food & Feed Ingredients
- Upstream Process & Feedstock Optimisation
- Circular & Sustainable Food Packaging

DIGITAL & AUTONOMOUS FARMING SOLUTIONS

- AI-Driven Precision Farming & Decision Intelligence
- Autonomous Machinery, Robotics & Drones
- Farm Data Infrastructure, IoT & Interoperability
- Digital Twins, Virtual Farms & Simulation Tools
- Automation for Controlled Environments & Livestock
- Cybersecurity for Farm Systems

FUTURE RESILIENT AGRICULTURE

- Soil Health & Regenerative Systems
- Climate-Resilient Crops & Genetic Innovations
- Bio-Inputs & Natural Crop Protection
- Carbon- Nitrogen & Nutrient-Efficient Farming (On-Farm Focus)
- Biodiversity Monitoring Technologies

WATER-SMART AGRIFOOD SYSTEMS

- Precision Irrigation & Real-Time Water Management
- Soil-Water Retention & Drought-Resilient Water Management
- Circular water use & On-farm recycling
- Water Governance, Modelling & Risk Decision Support
- Water-Efficient Food Processing
- Waste-water Valorisation for Food-grade Applications

SMART AND LOW-CARBON SUPPLY CHAINS

- Optimising Crop Processing and Storage
- Advanced Tracking, Tracing, and Predictive Models
- Reducing Food Loss across the Supply Chain
- Precision Measurement, Reporting, and Verification (MRV)
- Resilient & Decentralized Food Networks

- At (pre-)seed stage successfully completed customer validation and can already demonstrate traction indicator (e.g. LoIs, sales, letters of support);
- Registered company in or after 2016 with a prototype or ongoing pilot project (paid or unpaid);
- Have between 1 and 20 employees, not including interns and contractors;
- Having revenues of up to €1M to date;

- Last funding round – grant/pre-seed/seed/series A;
- Be a legally incorporated entity in one of the EU or Horizon Europe eligible country listed here: LINK ;
- Committed to the programme (we expect active, consistent engagement in the programme - this requires the presence from at least one team member for the duration of the accelerator programme);
- Submit a fully completed application in English through **MyEIT Food Portal** by the deadline set in article 3.2 including all requested documents;
- Provide a PIC Number: https://www.eitfood.eu/files/PIC-Guidance.pdf
- None of the Exclusion Criteria must apply to the applicant, as outlined in article 3.3.3.

EIT Food offers several programmes targeting entrepreneurs, startups and SMEs at various stages of maturity. For a complete overview of current EIT Food programme offering please visit the following homepage: https://www.eitfood.eu/entrepreneurship

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.

5.3 Exclusion criteria

Consulting service companies without a tangible product will be excluded, including one-person company.

Participants will be excluded if they (or one of them):

- Are subject to an administrative sanction (i.e. exclusion).
- Are in one of the following situations:
  - Convicted of involvement in a criminal organisation, terrorism-related crimes (including terrorism financing), child labour or human trafficking (including persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control);
  - Shown significant deficiencies in complying with main obligations under a procurement contract, grant agreement or grant decision financed by the EU or Euratom budget (including persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control);

- Found guilty of irregularities within the meaning of Article 1(2) of Regulation No 2988/95 (including persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control).

- Have misrepresented information required for participating in the EIT FAN or fail to submit such information.
- Were involved in the preparation of the grant documents where such involvement entails a distortion of competition.
- Applications involving activities that are too security-sensitive to be disclosed in compliance with Commission Decision 2015/444—i.e., where the information must be EU-classified and its unauthorized disclosure could adversely impact the interests of the EU or one or more Member States.

For additional exclusion criteria please refer to Annex 1: Exclusion criteria and Administrative Items.

5.4. Documents and reporting

Participants may be asked at a later stage for further documents (for legal entity validation, bank account validation, etc). Moreover, startups supported by the EIT FAN agree to participate in the programme evaluation at the end of the programme. They also agree to participate in the EIT FAN satisfaction survey and to provide additional information (esp. financial data and information on investment capital raised, innovations introduced on the market) for up to three additional years after the end of the programme.

Finally, participants in the EIT FAN shall allow and support any checks, reviews, audits and investigations by EIT Food, EIT and/or any other competent EU body deemed necessary.

6. Evaluation and Selection

6.1 Eligibility

All submitted applications will undergo an eligibility check and a multi-stage evaluation process to determine their feasibility and suitability for the funding opportunity.

During the eligibility check, if EIT Food identifies obvious or technical errors in a proposal, the 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. This opportunity is strictly limited to rectifying technical errors only and does not permit substantive modifications to the proposal content.

6.2 Evaluation Process

The evaluation will be conducted in three rounds, two for programme participation and one for Tech Validation, involving both external and internal evaluators, as described below.

All external evaluators are selected through an open and transparent process. All evaluators, both internal and external, are trained extensively on the European Union Code of Conduct for Evaluators, with particular attention to transparency, equal treatment of applicants, confidentiality, and avoidance of conflicts of interest. Evaluators are contractually required 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.

6.2.1 Evaluation Process and Criteria

The evaluation to access the Programme will happen in two stages:

First Evaluation Round

The first evaluation round is performed online by a carefully selected panel of external experts in the agrifood sector. This round assesses the potential impact of the startup and the alignment of the application with the objectives of EIT Food.

The first evaluation round is scored on a 1–7 scale, as shown below.

Criteria	Sub criteria	Score
Excellence (55%)	***Problem–Solution Fit*** (10%): The extent to which the startup addresses a clearly defined, real, and significant problem for a specific and well-characterised target customer segment.	1-7

	Technology Novelty (20%): The degree of technological novelty and differentiation of the core technology or application compared to existing solutions. ***Quality of the Team*** (10%): The extent to which the startup team demonstrates, and clearly articulates, the core technical, commercial, and business capabilities required to further develop the technology and successfully execute go-to-market and scaling activities. ***Overall recommendation to join programme*** (10%): An overall assessment of the startup's suitability for the EIT FAN programme, considering both quality and fit.	
Impact (30%)	***Technology Validation Needs*** (20%): The extent and appropriateness of technical validation required to demonstrate that the technology is viable, scalable, and ready for commercialisation. ***Commercial Validation Needs*** (10%): The extent to which the startup needs and can benefit from commercial validation support from the programme to demonstrate real market demand and a credible path to revenue.	1-7
Quality and efficiency of the implementation (20%)	***Business Model Validation*** (10%): The degree to which the startup has validated (or clearly identified the need to validate) a viable, sustainable, and scalable business model. ***Traction*** (10%): The extent to which the startup demonstrates tangible progress and execution capability in the market (in the form of e.g. LOIs, first revenues, etc.).	1-7

Second Evaluation Round

The second evaluation round consists of online pitching sessions ("Technology & Business Deep Dives") and motivation interviews, organised by the Hub accelerator representatives.

A panel of two internal and two external experts will evaluate each startup. The Strategic Fit score will be calculated as the average of the two internal evaluators' scores and will not overweigh the assessment of external evaluators.

This round assesses technology validation needs, technical and customer readiness, economic viability, scalability, and potential impact, as well as the motivation to join the programme, ensuring a good fit between the startup's needs and the support provided by EIT FAN at Hub level.

The second evaluation round is scored on a 1–7 scale, as shown below.

Criteria	Sub criteria	Score

Excellence (30%)	***Problem–Solution Fit*** (10%): The extent to which the startup addresses a clearly defined, real, and significant problem for a specific and well-characterised target customer segment. ***Technology Novelty*** (20%): The degree of technological novelty and differentiation of the core technology or application compared to existing solutions. ***Market Viability*** (10%): The extent to which the startup's target market is sufficiently large, accessible, and sustainable to support the successful adoption and *growth of its product or service.*	1-7
Impact (25%)	***Impact of Solution*** (10%): The extent to which the startup's product or service produces meaningful, measurable, and positive outcomes for its target users, stakeholders, or broader ecosystem. ***Technology Validation Needs*** (20%): The extent and relevance of the technical validation required to demonstrate that the technology is viable, scalable, and progressing toward commercialisation. This includes assessing whether the proposed validation activities are appropriate for the current stage of development (TRL), and whether this stage is well aligned with what the programme can effectively support. The need for and justification of programme support should be clearly articulated.	1-7
Quality and efficiency of the implementation (30%)	***Scalability of technology manufacturing and/or deployment*** (10%): The level of confidence that the startup can meet future market demand at scale. It can be based on factors including technical architecture, manufacturing capacity, supply chain dependencies, deployment complexity, regulatory constraints, operational robustness.	1-7
Strategic Fit (20%)	***Overall recommendation to join programme*** (20%): An overall assessment of the startup's suitability for the EIT FAN programme, considering both quality and fit.	1-7

Third Evaluation Round

The Technology Validation Pitch Event takes place at the end of the accelerator programme and serves as the evaluation round for accessing the Tech Validation funding.

This evaluation consists of live pitching sessions, where startups present their Technology Validation Project to a Jury composed of entrepreneurs, researchers, and experts from the agriculture and food industries, organised at Hub level. Each Hub hosts its own pitch event, with startups pitching alongside peers from the same Hub.

A jury panel including 1 to 2 internal, and 3 external experts evaluates each startup. The composition of the jury is distinct from earlier programme evaluation rounds. Internal evaluators will only assess Strategic Fit.

This round assesses the technology validation objectives and methodology, technical maturity and readiness, economic viability, scalability, and potential impact, as well as the strategic relevance and feasibility of the proposed Tech Validation Project. The evaluation determines both the startup's readiness to execute the project and the appropriate level of Tech Validation funding.

The Technology Validation Pitch Event is scored on a 1–7 scale, and determines eligibility for €20k, €30k or €50k in Tech Validation funding.

Criteria	Sub criteria	Score
Excellence (5%)	***Value proposition*** (5%): The extent to which the startup offers a clear, meaningful, and differentiated value proposition to its defined target market.	1-7
Impact (20%)	***Go to market*** (10%): The extent to which the startup clearly defines and convincingly presents a credible and robust go-to-market and commercialisation strategy and demonstrates its alignment with the technical readiness of the product or service. ***Scalability*** (10%): The extent to which the startup clearly articulates and convincingly demonstrates its potential to scale efficiently and sustainably, increasing revenue, market reach, or operational capacity without a disproportionate increase in costs, complexity, or risk.	1-7
Quality and efficiency of the implementation (55%)	***Feasibility of the Tech Validation Plan*** (15%): The extent to which the proposed technology validation plan is realistic, achievable, and sufficient to demonstrate technical functionality, performance, and readiness for further development or commercialisation. ***Facility needs*** (15%): The degree to which the startup has clearly identified and secured appropriate facilities or infrastructures required to carry out the proposed technology validation activities. ***Value for money*** (15%): The extent to which the expected benefits, outcomes, or impact of the proposed activities are proportionate to and justify the associated costs.	1-7

	Risk level (10%): The extent to which the startup has identified, assessed, and credibly mitigated the key technical, commercial, operational, and regulatory risks that could affect the successful development, validation, deployment, or scaling of its solution.	
Strategic Fit (20%)	***Should the startup receive a Tech Validation funding?*** (20%): A holistic assessment of whether the startup should receive a Technology Validation Award based on its overall performance, progress, and alignment with EIT FAN criteria.	1-7

Scoring Criteria

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

Score	Label	Description
1	Very Poor	The criterion is not addressed, or there are critical deficiencies that make the application unacceptable with respect to this criterion.
2	Poor	The criterion is inadequately addressed and presents major weaknesses.
3	Fair	The criterion is partially addressed, but significant weaknesses remain.
4	Good	The criterion is adequately addressed, though several shortcomings are present.
5	Very Good	The criterion is well addressed, with only minor shortcomings.
6	Excellent	The criterion is very well addressed, with negligible shortcomings.
7	Outstanding	The criterion is addressed in an exceptional manner, fully meeting and exceeding all relevant aspects, with no material weaknesses.

The quality threshold for selection is a total weighted score of 4.0. The top highest-scoring applications will be selected.

6.3 Announcing results of the call

The results of the EIT Food Accelerator Network selection process will be communicated to applicants by email following the completion of each evaluation round. Each eligible

candidate will receive a personalised message containing consolidated feedback from all evaluators, as well as information on the next steps in the process. The final results, including the presentation of the 2026 FAN cohort, will be publicly announced on the EIT Food website, on EIT Food social media, and through EIT Food newsletters.

6.4 Redress or appeal on evaluation results

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

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

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

7. Administrative Items

7.1 Onboarding

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

As part of the onboarding process, selected entities must:

- Provide certificate of incorporation
- Sign and submit the Declaration of Size.
- Sign and submit the Financial Information Form.
- Register on myeitfood.eu platform.

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

- an enhanced financial responsibility regime, i.e. joint and several liability for all subgrantees or joint and several liabilities of Affiliated Entities if any
- prefinancing paid in instalments (multiple/additional prefinancing)
- (one or more) prefinancing guarantees

    - or
- propose no prefinancing or
- request that the entity be replaced or, if needed, might reject the entire proposal

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

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

7.2 EIT Food Legal Framework and Documents to be signed

After successful onboarding participants 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 (travel subgrant)**
2. **Lump Sum Agreement (only Tech Validation Winners)**
3. **SAFE Agreement (only Tech Validation Winners)**

Any other legal agreements to make this grant eligible.

7.3 Payment Schedule

The total lump sum contribution will be disbursed in two instalments: first as 50% pre-financing upon signing the corresponding agreements and second as 50% 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.

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, however the Financial Return Mechanism Agreement cannot be re-negotiated following the approval of the Activity.

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.

8. Access to further funding opportunities

Proof of Concept Funding

Startups admitted to the programme and alumni may qualify for up to €100k in EIT Food funding, delivered via a sub-grant agreement to support startup-corporate collaboration projects. The award of funding is contingent on a successful due-diligence review by the EIT Food Corporate Venturing team, and the signing of the sub-grant agreement as well as a service agreement by the client partner counterpart to cover 60% of the project costs.

More information about the funding opportunity will be published on the website.

Investment by EIT Food

Startups admitted to the programme and alumni may qualify for up to €2 million in EIT Food funding, delivered via a sub-grant agreement and a Simple Agreement for Future Equity (SAFE). The award of funding is contingent on a successful due-diligence review by the EIT Food investment team, approval by the EIT Food investment advisory committee, and the signing of both the sub-grant and SAFE agreements by all parties.

More information about the funding opportunity here.

Access to RisingFoodStars

After completing the EIT Food Network programme 2026, participants are eligible to earn the RisingFoodStars scaleup verification recognition and related funding opportunities by expressing their interest in 2027 through a simplified form.

RisingFoodStars is EIT Food's recognition for scaleups that have demonstrated not just potential, but the rigorous work and discipline required to scale with impact. The RisingFoodStars scaleup verification badge acts as a shorthand for company's maturity, showing that the venture has gone through a structured, demanding process to strengthen its leadership, commercial model, investment readiness and system impact. Awarded to the strongest startups advancing from the EIT Food Accelerator Network, RisingFoodStars highlights companies that are ready for meaningful commercial partnerships, investment, and growth.

This scaleup verification badge will only be open to EIT Food Accelerator Network alumni, RisingFoodStars alumni and referred companies as of 2027.

The benefits behind this badge include:

- Proof and trust: Through an independent evaluation by experts, corporates and investors, this badge acts as a strong external signal of scaleup maturity to reduce investor and corporate due diligence at global level.
- Growth and acceleration: The recognition comes with a growth plan including personalise mentorship, priority access to on-demand sprints at discounted rate (eg. Series A fundraising, GoToMarket strategy)
- Visibility and influence: Recognised scaleups will be given priority on event visibility and PR through EIT Food and its partners, will receive founder spotlights and media support and will be able to leverage their verification badge on their social media, website and pitch decks.

Note: In 2026, EIT Food entrepreneurship programmes alumni at the right maturity stage (e.g. EIT FAN, RFS, EWA from 2023,2024 and 2025 cohorts) are already eligible to apply for the new RisingFoodStars scaleup verification recognition through the open call which will open in Feb/March 2026. They will receive a separate communication about it.

9. Other conditions

9.1 Publicity – Promoting the EIT FAN – Visibility of the EU Funding

Publicity by the participants

The companies selected must support the promotion of the EIT Food Accelerator Network, by providing targeted information in a strategic and effective manner.

Unless EIT Food requests or agrees otherwise or unless it is impossible, selected startups must:

a) EIT Food Logo (and website) with the EU emblem and
b) include the following text:

"Co-Funded by the European Union" on their web page.

For any communication activity related to the EIT FAN (including in electronic form, via social media, etc.) startups must:

c) Use "#EITFAN" for online communication about the programme
d) Tag EIT Food Accelerator Network if applicable (LinkedIn: https://www.linkedin.com/showcase/eit-food-accelerator-network-/ ; Facebook: @EITFood.eu; X: @EIT_Food)

When displayed together with another logo, the EIT FAN logo and EU emblem must have appropriate prominence.

For the purposes of their obligations, the selected companies may use the EIT FAN logo and the EU emblem without first obtaining approval from EIT Food.

This does not, however, give it the right to exclusive use.

Moreover, they may not appropriate the EU emblem or any similar trademark or logo, either by registration or by any other means.

Publicity by EIT Food

EIT Food may use, for its communication and publicising activities, information relating to the action, documents notably summaries for publication as well as any other material, such as

pictures or audio-visual material that it receives from the participants (including in electronic form).

EIT Food will publish the name of the funded companies, their origin, and its nature and purpose — unless they have requested to waive this publication (because disclosure risks threatening its security and safety or harm its commercial interest). EIT Food may include applicant information in its startup-corporate matchmaking program.

Photos and videos taken by EIT Food during the EIT Food events where the selected companies will feature are the sole property of EIT Food.

9.2 Dissemination and exploitation of results

Applicants retain full and exclusive ownership of their prior information and intellectual property rights. By submitting their application, applicants warrant that they hold ownership or have legally secured the right to use all elements of the innovative product or service and that the provided materials and information do not infringe any intellectual or other property rights, including patents, of any other persons, companies, or other entities. Elements of the submission that are based on rights held by others, such as patents, shall be marked as such in the submission.

EIT Food and their authorised representatives in the program undertake to ensure the confidentiality of the projects presented and developed throughout the EIT FAN. By submitting the application within the program, applicants consent that EIT Food and its accelerator Hubs will collect, transfer, process, store and delete your data under abovementioned conditions.

The selected companies agree that their data as well as non-confidential information about their project, may be used by EIT Food and their authorised representatives without compensation for promotion of their activities.

9.3 Processing of personal data

Processing of personal data by EIT Food

Any personal data will be processed by EIT Food in accordance with the EIT Food privacy policy notice(s): https://www.eitfood.eu/pages/privacy-policy

Processing of personal data by the participants

The participants must process personal data in compliance with applicable EU and national law on data protection (including authorisations or notification requirements, if any), see the GDPR recommendations.

9.4 Ethics

The activities must be carried out in compliance with:
a) ethical principles (including the highest standards of research integrity) and
b) applicable international, EU and national law.

The participants must ensure that the activities of their company have an exclusive focus on civil applications.

The participants must respect the highest standards of research integrity — as set out, for instance, in the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity.

9.5 Liability for damages

EIT Food cannot be held liable for any damage caused to the participants or to third parties as a consequence of the grant, including for gross negligence.

EIT Food cannot be held liable for any damage caused by any of the participants in the context of the grant.

9.6 Administrative sanctions

If a participant has committed irregularities or fraud or has made false declarations, EIT Food may also:
a. exclude the participant from all future contracts, grants and contests financed from the EU or Euratom budget for a maximum of five years (or 10 years in case of repetition) and/or
b. impose a financial penalty between 2% and 10% of the value of the grant (or between 4% and 20% in case of repetition).

9.7 Cancellation of the programme

EIT Food may cancel the programme or decide not to award any of the aforementioned grants or funding — without any obligation to compensate participants —, if:

a. no applications are received
b. the jury does not find a winner
c. the winner(s) is not eligible or must be excluded

9.8 Terms & Conditions

By signing the confirmation of participation, applicants agree to the Terms and Conditions. EIT Food reserves the right to make reasonable amendments to these Terms and Conditions. Amendments and additions to these Terms and Conditions shall be valid if communicated in writing on the EIT Food website or otherwise made available to the applicants.

These Terms and Conditions are governed by the laws of Belgium. Any disagreement or dispute which may arise in connection with these Terms and Conditions which cannot be settled amicably will be brought before the courts of Brussels, Belgium.

To the maximum extent permitted by law, under no circumstances and under no legal theory whether in tort (including negligence) contract or otherwise shall EIT Food and the EIT Food partners involved in this activity be liable for any special indirect, punitive, incidental or consequential damages, including loss of profit.

You may withdraw your application as well as participation in the EIT FAN any time by informing us by email or withdrawing your registration any time.

10. Contact

The EIT FAN is organised by EIT Food and its regional Accelerator Hubs which act as managing partners in coordinating the collection, evaluation, awarding and follow-up process at regional level.

Alexandra Kyvik
EIT FAN Programme Manager
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Other information sources

EIT Food web page: www.eitfood.eu
EIT FAN web page: https://www.eitfood.eu/entrepreneurship/accelerate-food-accelerator-network

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.