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Request for Seedbed Alumni Investment Participants Guidelines

SUP-BC-25-19198-23-01

EIT FOOD

Leuven, Belgium

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eitfood.eu

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Call Fact Sheet

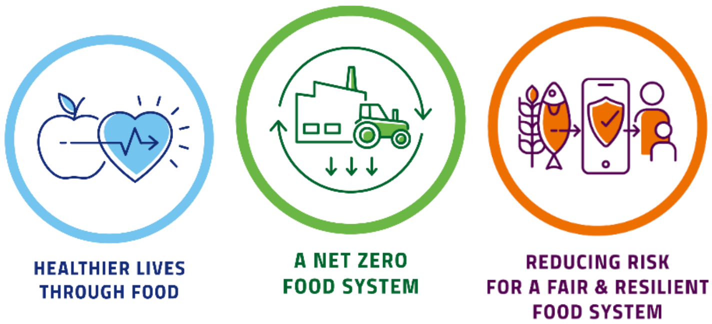
Title of Call	Seedbed Alumni Investment 2025
Objective and Scope	EIT Food is seeking applications from the Seedbed Alumni to support their innovation commercialisation
Call Deadline	01/09/2025 at 16:00 CET
Available Funding	Up to €50,000 per startup
Project Duration	13 months
How to apply	https://www.myeitfood.eu/s/login/
Contact Information	callsupport-entrepreneurship@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. Adding Implementing Participants to Seedbed Alumni Investment

This EIT Food Request for Implementing Participants has the objective of recruiting participants to join an existing consortium tasked with implementing Seedbed Alumni Investment.

The EIT Food Seedbed Alumni Investment can provide funding up to €50,000 per venture to implement innovation activities that contribute to the development and commercialization of new technologies, products and services.

2.1. Description of Activities

The EIT Food Seedbed Alumni Investment can provide funding up to €50,000 per venture to implement innovation activities that contribute to the development and commercialization of new technologies, products and services.

As a result of the funding having to adhere to Horizon Europe guidelines, activities that can be funded include:

A. R&D and product development activities required for the success of the venture's solution in the market (e.g. by organizing facilities, hiring key R&D personnel, or leasing equipment);
B. Commercialization activities critical to the success of the venture's solution in the market, by executing pilot projects, performing market research, engaging with potential customer – as long as the commercialization activities are directly linked to the proposed innovation;
C. Fundraising activities critical to the success of long-term value creation by the venture, e.g. by further developing business plan material, involving specific consultancy expertise.

2.2. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

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

KPI Code	KPI Name	KPI Definition	Target
EITHE06	Investment attracted by KIC supported start-ups and scaleups	Investment attracted by KIC supported start-ups/scale- ups: 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.	3
EITHE02.1	Innovations launched on the market	Number of all innovations introduced on the market during the KAVA duration or within 3 years after completion. Innovations include new or significantly improved products (goods or services) sold	3

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 final deliverables at the end of the implementation period. For this activity the deliverables include:

- Communication, Dissemination and Outreach Plan
- Innovation commercialisation related to one or all of the following objectives
    - R&D and product development activities required for the success of the venture's solution in the market (e.g. by organizing facilities, hiring key R&D personnel, or leasing equipment);
    - Commercialization activities critical to the success of the venture's solution in the market, by executing pilot projects, performing market research, engaging with potential customer – as long as the commercialization activities are directly linked to the proposed innovation;
    - Fundraising activities critical to the success of long-term value creation by the venture, e.g. by further developing business plan material, involving specific consultancy expertise.

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.

The total lump sum contribution of €50,000 will be disbursed in full as pre-financing, conditional upon the delivery of the two project deliverables mentioned above – for details on budget breakdown see section 4 "Funding".

3. Description of Role & Profile

3.1 Role

The applicant's role will focus on the implementation of innovation, commercialization, and fundraising activities that align with the objectives of the Seedbed Alumni Investment Scheme. Specifically, the applicant is expected to:

- Deploy the awarded funding to execute eligible innovation activities as defined under Horizon Europe guidelines, including R&D, product development, market validation, and investor readiness.
- Contribute to the achievement of key EIT KPIs such as:
    - KPI 06: Investment attracted by supported startups.
    - KPI 02.1: Marketed innovations resulting from EIT-supported activities.
- Actively participate in reporting and monitoring processes, including quarterly check-ins and final reporting obligations.
- Maintain alignment with EIT Food's mission to drive high-impact, scalable innovations across Europe's agrifood sector.

3.2 Profile

The applicant organization must be:

- The venture must be graduated from the EIT Food Seedbed entrepreneurship programme. This scheme is open exclusively for EIT Food Seedbed Alumni.
- The venture must be relevant for one or more of the EIT Food Missions.

- The venture must receive a recommendation from a current or previous EIT Food Seedbed coach.
- The subgrant and SAFE agreements can only be signed with legal entities. Any successful alumni must have a registered legal entity in a Member State of the European Union (EU) or associated countries to Horizon Europe. This registration must have taken place before the application period, and proof of company registration must be submitted to EIT Food.
- The venture must be a Small Enterprise as defined under the EU recommendation 2003/361;
- The applicant must have a clear 12 – 24-month funding roadmap to support the building of their venture. This funding roadmap can include both non-equity funding (e.g. public grants) and equity-based investment;
- The venture or applicant must own or have rights to the intellectual property that is the basis for the venture's solution (if applicable);
- The venture must have a suitable team to lead the venture towards achieving its upcoming funding roadmap and key business milestones;
- None of the Exclusion Criteria must apply to the applicant, as outlined in section 6;
- Application must be submitted in English, including the submission of a full standard startup pitch deck in English;

4. Funding

The total budget for this call is €250,000. Implementing participant recipients will receive a subgrant to fund their cost.

The project runs from December 2025 to December 2026. The maximum funding available for that period per application is €50,000 given as a lump sum.

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 euros per Grant Agreement if duly justified. This funding is implemented under GA 01101912. 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 lump sum contribution 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 of €50,000 will be disbursed in full as pre-financing, conditional upon the delivery of the two project deliverables mentioned above in section 2.3. Deliverables and Milestones:

Deliverable 1: Communication, Dissemination, and Outreach

- Allocated Value: €5,000 (10% of the lump sum)

‣ This includes preparation of outreach materials, visibility actions, and alignment with EIT Food brand and communications strategy.

Deliverable 2: Innovation Commercialisation

‣ Allocated Value: €45,000 (90%)

‣ This includes activities related to product development, commercialization, and fundraising, as outlined in the approved proposal.

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.

4.1. Financial Sustainability

EIT Food ensures financial sustainability of this activity through a SAFE (Simple Agreement for Future Equity) investment mechanism. Under this structure:

Selected startups receive public funding to implement innovation, commercialization, and fundraising activities critical to their growth.

The investment is contractually structured as a SAFE, which provides EIT Food the right to convert the funding into equity at a discounted rate during a future qualified equity financing or liquidity event.

This conversion mechanism creates a long-term return pathway for EIT Food, aligning the interests of the supported ventures with the sustainability goals of the EIT.

In case of a successful exit or significant funding round, EIT Food may gain equity stakes, contributing to the replenishment of EIT resources and reducing dependence on public funds.

This success-based model aligns with EIT's objective to transition from pure grant funding to return-generating support instruments that maintain alignment with EU policy goals while reinforcing the sustainability of the KIC.

5. Call Timeline and Application

5.1 Timeline

This funding opportunity follows the timeline below:

Call Open Date	01/08/2025
Call Deadline	01/09/2025 at 16:00 CET
Evaluation	03/09/2025 - 12/09/2025
Invitation to interviews	15/09/2025
Interviews	22/09/2025 - 25/09/2025
Communication to selected participants	26/09/2025
Standstill period, Onboarding, Validation and Contracting	01/10/2025 - 30/11/2025
Indicative start of project implementation	01/12/2025

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.

5.2 Application Submission

Applications must be submitted via MyEITFood Portal no later than the call deadline.

6. Eligibility, Evaluation and Selection Process

6.1 Eligibility

This call is open to all startups that have completed in full the Seedbed programme. Please read Annex 1, in addition to the following eligibility criteria:

Organisation Eligibility	Each implementing participant must:
	• Provide a PIC Number: https://www.eitfood.eu/files/PIC-Guidance.pdf • The venture must be relevant for one or more of the EIT Food Missions. • The venture must receive a recommendation from a current or previous EIT Food Seedbed coach. • The subgrant and SAFE agreements can only be signed with legal entities. Any successful alumni must have a registered legal entity in a Member State of the European Union (EU) or associated countries to Horizon Europe. This registration must have taken place before the start of the application period, and proof of company registration must be submitted to EIT Food. • The venture must be a Small Enterprise as defined under the EU recommendation 2003/361; • The applicant must have a clear 12 – 24-month funding roadmap to support the building of their venture. This funding roadmap can include both non-equity funding (e.g. public grants) and equity-based investment; • The venture or applicant must own or have rights to the intellectual property that is the basis for the venture's solution (if applicable); • The venture must have a suitable team to lead the venture towards achieving its upcoming funding roadmap and key business milestones;
Application Eligibility	Each application must:
	• Be complete, with all mandatory application documents uploaded. • Be submitted on time via our submission template. • Be fully written in English.

Equal opportunity: The call is open to all eligible 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.

Exclusion criteria:

Ventures are ineligible for investment if they:

- are subject to an administrative sanction (i.e. exclusion);
- are in one of the following situations:
  - bankrupt, being wound up, having their affairs administered by the courts, entered an arrangement with creditors, suspended business activities or subject to any other similar proceedings or procedures under national law (including persons with unlimited liability for the participant's debts)
  - declared in breach of social security or tax obligations by a final judgment or decision (including persons with unlimited liability for the participant's debts)
  - found guilty of grave professional misconduct by a final judgment or decision (including persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control)
  - convicted of fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organisation, money laundering, 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 Food funding scheme or fail to submit such information;
- have received any equity-based investment for their venture.
- have received any SAFE investments from EIT Food
- are part of the 2025 cohort or alumnus of EIT Food RisingFoodStars
- have purely commercial (e.g. such as import/export, distributors, resellers…) or consulting business models without novel technology, products or IP.
- are owned by EIT Food employees or members of EIT Food government bodies; or are ventures in which EIT Food employees or members of EIT Food government bodies have an interest. EIT Food includes all CLCs of EIT Food and all governing bodies.
- were involved in the preparation of the any documentation regarding this call or are involved in the evaluation process of this call and this entails a distortion of competition.

6.2 Evaluation Process

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

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 a minimum of 3 external evaluators based on the criteria below.

6.2.1. Evaluation Criteria

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

Criteria	Sub criteria	Score
Excellence (30%)	• Clarity, relevance, and novelty of the proposed innovation • Added value of the solution in the context of the agrifood ecosystem • Strength and protection of intellectual property (IP) and knowledge management strategy • Integration of the gender dimension	0-5
Impact (35%)	• Potential for high societal and economic impact aligned with EIT Food's three missions • Clear definition of customer segments and problem-solution fit • Evidence of market validation and long-term scalability • Clear value proposition and defined business model for bringing the product or service to market.	0-5
Quality and efficiency of the implementation (35%)	• Realistic and clearly structured roadmap for 12–24 months • Coherence of budget with proposed activities and deliverables • Strength and complementarity of the team • Ability to deliver on time and manage risk	0-5

Each evaluation sub-criterion will be scored from 1 to 5 using the following scoring system.

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

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.

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 5 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:

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

Additionally, EIT Food reserves the right to request to 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 & 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:

1. **SAFE Agreement**
2. **Sub grant agreement**

Any other legal agreements to make this grant eligible.

7.3 Payment Schedule

The funding will be made available in one lump sum based on clear deliverables and accompanying budget estimation that are proposed. The lump sum will be transferred up-front, as pre-financing. Progress will be monitored periodically and reported. A lump sum payment was chosen as this gives the selected startups the best possible opportunity to utilize the awarded funds immediately to support their stated deliverables.

Eligible Costs Covered by 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 (up to €30,000):** Partial salaries for core team members (e.g. founders, technical or commercial leads) engaged in product development, commercialization, and investor readiness.
- **Other Goods & Services (up to €15,000):** External experts (e.g. legal, regulatory, or IP), outsourced product development, software tools, fundraising support, and other operational services that drive business growth.
- **Travel (up to €5,000):** In-person attendance at critical meetings with partners, investors, and pilot collaborators within Europe.

These categories have been defined based on typical needs of pre-revenue, pilot-stage startups and are proportionally allocated to key deliverables.

Link to Deliverables and Deduction Rates
The lump sum contribution is directly tied to the completion of two core deliverables:

1. Communication, Dissemination and Outreach Plan
2. Innovation commercialisation
    a. Includes product development, commercialization efforts, and fundraising work

Each deliverable is associated with a proportional cost allocation and deduction rate, to be applied in cases of non-fulfilment. In the event that one or more deliverables are not achieved, a deduction will be applied proportionally to the budgeted amount for that deliverable.

Please note: the amount and 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, 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.

7.5 Support

If you have any questions about this Request for Implementing Participants, please contact callsupport-entrepreneurship@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.

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 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.